DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

4 p.m. 2/26. [1976]

Subj: Reading material for Tues plane ride to NYC.

S:n:

Attached is an advance copy of an article about your Middle East diplomacy which will appear in Foreign Policy, March 7.

I just got it, so I haven't had time to review it for you.

BN Shumate.

FOREIGN POLICY

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A.M.

FOR RELEASE ON MARCH 7, 1976; ~~5:00 P.M.~~

NEW DISCLOSURES RELEASED ON KISSINGER'S MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMACY

Presidents Nixon and Ford, in 1974 and 1975, secretly assured Arab leaders that the United States favored an Israeli withdrawal to its 1967 frontiers, according to an article published in FOREIGN POLICY magazine today.

The article, entitled "How Kissinger Did It: Step-by-Step in the Middle East," by Edward R.F. Sheehan, discloses that in June, 1974 Nixon told Anwar el-Sadat that the American objective in the Sinai was to restore the old Egyptian international border. At other meetings, Sheehan reports, Nixon told President Assad and King Hussein that the United States "favored the substantial restitution of the 1967 frontiers on the Golan Heights and on the West Bank of Jordan." President Ford, according to Sheehan, reaffirmed those positions to Sadat in June of 1975.

Sheehan also provides the first comprehensive account of Henry Kissinger's diplomacy in the Middle East from the October War to the present, including transcripts of discussions with Arab and Israeli leaders never disclosed before. At a meeting with Sadat on November 7, 1973, for example, Kissinger overcame Sadat's insistence on immediate Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines in favor of a partial Israeli retreat in the Sinai desert. As a result of that meeting, according to Sheehan, the United States had its first Arab policy - a commitment that "so long as [the Arabs] understood the United States would not abandon Israel, Washington would... wield its power to regain Arab rights." It was at that moment, Sheehan concludes, "that Kissinger decided he was dealing not with a clown, but with a statesman."

Indeed, Sheehan's account, critical but often sympathetic toward Kissinger's diplomacy, suggests that Kissinger hoped to push Israel back to its 1967 borders but was frustrated by circumstance and his commitment to tactical success. In March, 1975 Kissinger complained to Arab leaders, "You can't believe what I'm going through... They're [the Israelis] trying to bring me down." At another point Kissinger described the Golan settlements to his aides as "the worst mistake the Jews have made in 2,500 years."

Sheehan's article, the longest ever published by FOREIGN POLICY (to be published this fall at greater length by Reader's Digest Press), reveals highlights of Kissinger's meetings with Arab and

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Israeli leaders, including

-Anwar el-Sadat, whom Kissinger first underestimated, but later considered a statesman "with a fixed determination to overcome obstacles and move toward peace."

-Golda Meir, who was obstinate at stages in the negotiations, but for whom Kissinger had special affection.

-King Faisal, who berated Kissinger for supporting a "Communist" state in Israel, but who promised to do all he could to promote negotiations - particularly in Syria.

-President Assad, whose personality fascinated Kissinger despite his stubbornness.

Sheehan also details the near collapse of Kissinger's step-by-step method, including the celebrated Israeli-Syrian disengagement of 1974. On May 27, Sheehan reveals, "Assad and Kissinger composed a communique announcing the collapse of the negotiations... Two days later, the agreement was reached." At another dramatic meeting on March 22, 1975, Kissinger confronted the Israeli leaders with his fears. "Step-by-step has been throttled," he said, "first for Jordan, then for Egypt... we see a friend [Israel] damaging himself for reasons which will seem trivial five years from now.... It's tragic to see people dooming themselves to a course of unbelievable peril." Kissinger also had misgivings about supplying arms to Israel and stationing Americans in the Sinai, and he and Nixon told the Pentagon to "play tough" on deliveries of arms during the October War.

Despite Kissinger's misgivings, Sheehan writes, Israeli limitations often prevailed. The "five-zone" concept, for example, which was the basis of the breakthrough to the first Egyptian-Israeli disengagement, was Moshe Dayan's idea. But this interim step avoided the problem of including the Palestinians in an overall settlement. Kissinger recently warned the Israelis that eventually they would have to abandon their settlements and retreat substantially to the 1967 lines. Nevertheless, until now Israeli intransigence has prevailed. In fact, Kissinger honored Israel's wishes as early as December, 1973, when Ambassador Dinitz warned, "Golda cannot go into the elections if there's any doubt on the Palestinians at Geneva."

American-Israeli relations, Sheehan concludes, have reached a state of "chronic crisis." "Israel has no foreign policy," Kissinger lamented to a friend, "only domestic politics." As a result, Sheehan writes, Kissinger's step-by-step diplomacy bought time and prevented war, but never addressed the central problems in the Middle East, problems that cannot be postponed much longer.

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STEP BY STEP IN THE MIDDLE EAST

by Edward R. F. Sheehan

For over two years, newspapers and newscasts around the world have been filled with the chronicle of Henry Kissinger's comings and goings in the Middle East, his seemingly ceaseless shuttling between Cairo, Jerusalem, Damascus, Riyadh, Amman, and other capitals to find partial agreements between the Arabs and the Israelis.

It has been, at best, a difficult saga to follow, full of sound and some fury—but signifying what? Even the expert will be excused for having on occasion failed to follow the course of the negotiations, or having lost interest in them.

But their importance is clear. They have established, in the words of one of America's leading Middle East experts, Edward R. F. Sheehan, our first postwar "Arab policy." Beyond that fact lie further questions, about the long-term value of the accomplishment, and about the future of U.S.-Israeli relations. Whatever lies ahead, however, a specific phase in the tortured history of Mideast diplomacy is now over, although it is too early to pass definitive judgment on it.

In the lengthy article that follows, Sheehan presents the first comprehensive account of that phase and of Kissinger's efforts. Based on extensive talks with American, Arab, and Israeli officials on three continents, Sheehan's article continues the effort of this magazine to present major investigative diplomatic reporting to our readers. An expansion of this article will appear as a book to be published next autumn by Reader's Digest Press.

The direct quotations of dialogue in the article are verbatim, condensed from the actual conversations between participants only when necessary for space reasons.—The Editors.

ince the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger has devoted more of his time and craft to the consequences of that conflict than to any other issue of foreign policy. Never has American diplomacy—or the man who conducts it—been so visibly committed to the solution of a problem. Throughout a dozen missions to the Middle East, throughout thousands of hours of negotiations there and in Washington, throughout three hundred thousand miles or more of flying to and fro, Kissinger has summoned all the power of his prodigious intellect to the fashioning of a new equation between the greatest of the Semitic peoples, aspiring to prevent another war that might overwhelm the world beyond. Today, nearly two and a half years after he began, we must assess his achievements, his failures, and his method—step-by-step diplomacy.

The most crucial of Kissinger's labors occurred in moments of great tension: between October 6, 1973, when the war broke out, and late December of that year, when the Geneva conference was convened; during January 1974, when he separated the Israeli and Egyptian armies and asserted the necessity of his personal intervention to achieve interim solutions; during May 1974, when he separated the Israeli and Syrian armies whilst the Syrians were waging a war of attrition; during March 1975, when his endeavor to negotiate a new agreement in the Sinai collapsed amidst recriminations with the government of Israel; and in August 1975, when he finally achieved that agreement at a high cost to the United States—though much lower, he insisted, than its alternative, another war.

Some significant features of Kissinger's diplomacy emerge from the multitude of his decisions:

> In the aftermath of the October war, he

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created a coherent Arab policy for the United States—the first secretary of state to do so. The policy was based on a quasi-alliance between Washington and Cairo—or more particularly, upon friendship between Kissinger and Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat. Kissinger assumed that with Sadat in hand the other Arabs would follow, but today that assumption is cast in doubt.

> Simultaneously with his effort to diminish the Arab-Israeli conflict, Kissinger has pursued a parallel policy in the Arab world —promotion of American technology—as a means of increasing American influence throughout the Arab nations.

> From the morrow of the war until late last year, Kissinger tenaciously avoided the Palestinian problem, though it is crucial to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

> Relations between the United States and Israel, which began to erode during the October war, have deteriorated to a condition of chronic crisis—dramatized by Kissinger's recurring clashes with Israeli leaders and Israel's American constituency.

> Kissinger had deep misgivings about stationing American technicians in the Sinai desert, and about his own policy of supplying vast quantities of arms to Israel.

> Kissinger consistently refused to promise the Arabs that the United States would push Israel back to its 1967 borders, but in June 1974 and June 1975, Presidents Nixon and Ford secretly assured the Arab leaders that the United States favored substantial restoration of the 1967 frontiers—a position Washington has so far declined to make public.

A Dangerous Test

"I never treat crises when they're cold," Kissinger once told a friend, "only when they're hot. This enables me to weigh the protagonists one against the other, not in terms of ten or two thousand years ago but in terms of what each of them merits at this moment." His principle was put to a dangerous test on the morrow of the October

war. Both Israelis and Egyptians expected Kissinger to rescue them from the impasse he had helped to contrive as the conclusion of that contest.

The armies of Israel and Egypt were chaotically intertwined: the Egyptians still held fast in the northern sector of the Suez Canal's eastern bank, but in the south their Third Army was surrounded; on the western bank, the Israelis had thrust to within 60 miles of Cairo and had encircled the city of Suez. Sadat was demanding an immediate Israeli retreat to the cease-fire lines of October 22 (as required by U.N. Security Council Resolution 338), and a peace conference to arrange total Israeli withdrawal from all of the Arab territories. Prime Minister Golda Meir, claiming that the October 22 lines were impossible to establish, demanded an immediate return to the lines of October 5, and a swift exchange of prisoners. The cease-fire threatened to collapse.

At the end of October, President Nixon invited Golda Meir to Washington: Sadat sent Ismail Fahmy, his irrepressible new foreign minister, without waiting for an invitation. As it happened, this enabled Kissinger to try his hand at instant mediation: he shuttled indefatigably between Fahmy at the State Department and Golda Meir at Blair House, though without palpable result. Fahmy insisted on the October 22 lines, Golda Meir upon her prisoners. Kissinger drew up a working draft of six points, providing in part for relief of the Third Army and an exchange of prisoners, and then, on November 5, 1973, flew off to the Middle East to deal with the belligerents *sur scène*.

He paused, en route, in Morocco and Tunisia to render his respects to Hassan II and Habib ben Ali Bourguiba, but Cairo was the focus of his quest. Sadat, whose acquaintance he was about to make, he had long considered a bombastic clown. He could be pardoned for that assumption, for it corresponded—until the war—with the assessment of numerous Egyptians. Gamal Abdel Nasser, whose own pigment was only faint-

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fact helped to promote the conventional strategic wisdom of the first Nixon administration—that in the absence of fruitful negotiations, a strong Israel, militarily much superior to its Arab foes, would prevent war and serve as the surest sentinel of American interests in the Middle East. When Kissinger glanced at the map of the Middle East, he saw the Soviet Union and the United States. He was distressed by the flow of Soviet weapons and military technicians into Egypt, and he had no mind to permit American munitions in Israel to be vanquished by Russian logistics to Cairo. Kissinger indeed became very much a "hard-liner" in the Middle East. Israeli Ambassador Yitzhak Rabin was his close friend, and privately, for a period, he favored Israel's aspiration to retain significant portions of Arab territory. He shared Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco's argument that the Israelis would never make concessions until they had confidence, and they could not have confidence until they achieved invincibility.

Sadat, meanwhile, was thrashing about in quest of a new policy. His "year of decision" (1971) had ended ignominiously, and—deprived of the Soviet offensive arms he needed to match Israel's—he was going nowhere with the Russians. Rogers had suggested to Sadat in Cairo that Nixon might be more forthcoming were Sadat to diminish the enormous Soviet presence in Egypt; in a famous indiscretion, Kissinger had already announced that the American purpose was to "expel" the Russians. Provoked also by the contradiction of Soviet policy—the Russians' preference for improved relations with the United States vs. their inadequate posture as Egypt's arsenal against Israel—and by internal pressure from his own army, Sadat in the summer of 1972 expelled nearly all of his 20,000 Soviet technicians.

Kissinger was astounded. "Why has Sadat done me this favor?" he asked his aides. "Why didn't he get in touch with me? Why didn't he demand of me all kinds of concessions first?" For in a curious intelligence

failure, Kissinger learned of the expulsion from news dispatches. Sadat, in desperation, had decided upon a *coup de théâtre*, a colossal thrust to buy more time, whilst he groped to elude his demon of "no war, no peace." Whatever his immediate motivations, he must have known that the expulsion would be perceived as another cry for American help. Publicly, Nixon all but ignored Sadat's epochal decision, though privately he responded—without committing himself. Kissinger drafted several secret messages for Nixon's signature which were then dispatched by intelligence channels directly to Sadat through Hafez Ismail, his national security adviser. In these, Nixon acknowledged the expulsion as an important act, and pledged that the administration would concentrate on the Middle East as soon as the presidential elections and the Vietnam negotiations were concluded.

At the end of February 1973, Ismail came to Washington. Kissinger spent a weekend in secret talks with that tall and taciturn Egyptian, expounding to him his notion of seeking a formula that would reconcile Egypt's sovereignty in the Sinai with Israel's insistence on security. Ismail left Washington prepared to advise Sadat that finally the Americans seemed serious about promoting negotiations. In Paris, en route home, Ismail read a *New York Times* report that Nixon had decided to furnish Israel with 36 new Skyhawks and 48 Phantoms. Through his secret channel, Kissinger hastened to assure Sadat that the report was false, that the Israeli request (long since pending) was still "under study." Kissinger was furious at the leak because it undermined his conversations with Ismail. The report, however, was not false, only premature; Nixon confirmed it in the spring.

The abortive Ismail mission was the turning point on the path to war. As the spring proceeded, Kissinger brooded on the Middle East and became progressively more uneasy. Secretly (without even informing Rogers) he met Ismail once more in Paris, where he

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sought to penetrate Egyptian suspicion with pleas for confidence. Sadat allowed the meeting chiefly as a cover, for he had taken his decision to wage war. From Riyadh, King Faisal began to warn that he might wield his "oil weapon" if Washington did not move the Israelis and very soon. Nevertheless, Kissinger thought he had time—and besides, Watergate was inching in on Nixon, shrinking his domestic power base, crippling his will to make decisions.

Whilst in New York in late September for the General Assembly of the United Nations, Kissinger (now secretary of state) invited the Arab foreign ministers to luncheon. Kissinger hitherto had avoided Arabs as best he could, and on this occasion was ill at ease because he fancied that his Jewishness might prejudice the dialogue. He decided to dissolve the barrier with a joke. "I recognize," he told his guests, "that many of you view me with suspicion. This reminds me of a story which corresponds to our situation. The Communists called a rally, and the police infiltrated it with an informer. Then the police broke in and beat everybody up. The informer protested and said, 'I'm the anti-Communist.' The police said, 'We don't care what kind of a Communist you are—you're under arrest.'"

Half the Arabs understood this as Kissinger's subtle way of poking fun at his own Jewishness, of assuring them he was not a Zionist, and they laughed. The other half had no idea of what he was talking about. "The problem of the Middle East is a complex one," he continued. "The United States recognizes that it involves a legitimate concern for security on one side and for justice on the other. Resolution 242[1] has many elements, but it is difficult and not practical to impose theoretical and comprehensive formulas on the Middle East. The problem should be approached gradually, piece by piece." He concluded by offering his friendship to the Arab world. "We recognize that the present situation is intolerable to the Arabs." Kissinger's style impressed the foreign ministers: no Anglo-Saxon secretary of state had displayed such warmth—*Semitic* warmth. Understandably pleased with his performance, Kissinger left the luncheon confident that he had several months to come up with something.

[1] *United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967 calls for Israeli withdrawal from Arab territory in return for secure and recognized frontiers.*

The fourth Arab-Israeli war began less than a fortnight later. That was on October 6; Kissinger believed the CIA and assumed the Israelis would win quickly. Perplexed and angry, for several days he complained constantly to his aides of "irrational Arabs," "demented Arabs," and of the Arabs' "romanticism which leads them to impossible expectations." Certain that Israel would crush Egypt, he feared that the Soviet Union would intervene, forcing the United States to intervene on the side of Israel and risking a war of the great powers.

On October 8 and 9, however, Kissinger's views began to change. After initial success on the Golan Heights, the Syrians were beginning to falter, but the Egyptians had crossed the Suez Canal, destroyed the Bar-Lev line, and now were entrenched several miles deep inside the Sinai desert. The Israelis had lost numerous tanks and aircraft; Kissinger was amongst the first to sense that the strategic balance was shifting away from them. He had no mind to restore it straightaway, because he recognized instinctively that the new balance tendered him an exquisite chance to use the war as an extension of diplomacy. If he allowed neither side to win decisively, then he might manipulate the result to launch negotiations, and—ultimately—to compose the Arab-Israeli quarrel. All of Kissinger's ensuing moves must be understood in this perspective.

Much has been written about Kissinger's role in the resupply of arms to Israel during the October war; he has been variously portrayed as a hero, valiantly struggling to overcome the obstructions of the Pentagon,

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and as a villain, malevolently playing games with Israel's fate. The evidence disavows such extreme interpretations. In keeping with his early perception that the war must be used to promote a settlement, Kissinger decided to withhold major deliveries to Israel so long as the Russians exercised restraint and so long as he hoped that Sadat would accept a cease-fire. Not only did he perceive an important opening to Egypt, he wished to prevent an oil embargo and a torrent of violent anti-American reprisals throughout the Arab world. Therefore, early during the war, Kissinger and Nixon devised a stratagem that became the source of many subsequent polemics. Nixon told the Pentagon to "play tough," to appear to impede major deliveries to Israel until such time as he and Kissinger determined otherwise. Neither Nixon nor Kissinger intended to be rushed by the Israelis, and both of them coveted the credit amongst American Jews should later circumstance constrain them to unleash an airlift.

The crisis with the Israelis intensified on October 10, when it became obvious that the war might drag on for weeks, but Kissinger persisted in blaming the Pentagon for obstructing major deliveries—the better to prevent Simcha Dinitz, the Israeli ambassador, from mobilizing American Jews against the administration. Dinitz swallowed Kissinger's protestations that the Pentagon bureaucracy was at fault, and withheld his "shock troops" (Kissinger's description). Kissinger was trying now to achieve a cease-fire in place; the Israelis angrily accepted it on October 12, and were rewarded with a slight crescendo of supplies. Sadat's refusal the next day, coupled with an enlargement of the Soviet airlift to Egypt and Syria, provoked Kissinger to cast aside the stratagem and release immense quantities of arms to Israel so as to end the war quickly and prove to the world that the conflict could not be decided by Russian guns.

Kissinger thereupon flew to Moscow,

where he negotiated with the Russians the terms of Security Council Resolution 338, which called for an immediate cease-fire in place, the implementation of Resolution 242 in all of its parts, and immediate negotiations between the parties to establish "a just and durable peace in the Middle East." The resolution was adopted on October 22, though the hostilities raged for several days more as the Israelis maneuvered to destroy the Third Army. Supported by Nixon, Kissinger applied intense pressure upon Israel to desist, and the war ended in deadlock—just as he had planned—with neither victor nor vanquished.

The October war revealed Kissinger at the apogee of his skill. Propelled by the vehemence of events, he recognized very early the paradoxical opportunities for peace, and he pursued peace without bending to the Russians, abandoning Israel, or irrevocably alienating the Arabs. For 10 days he was deeply anxious, but by the eleventh day he had snatched control of events. With Nixon enmeshed in scandal (Vice President Spiro Agnew's resignation and the Watergate "Saturday Night Massacre" took place at this time), Kissinger was in real measure running the world.

True, the airlift, when it came—then Nixon's request to Congress for $2.2 billion in aid to Israel—provoked the Arab oil embargo. True, the airlift and the subsequent (perhaps unnecessary) American nuclear alert imposed severe strain upon the Atlantic Alliance. But the airlift did not burn Kissinger's bridges to Sadat; hardly a fortnight after it began, Sadat announced to the world press that American policy was "constructive." This statement, so much at variance with Nasser's vindictive accusations in 1967, was the psychological breakthrough that Kissinger sought; a clear signal from Cairo that Sadat was aching to strike a bargain with the United States. In fact, throughout the war, even with American weapons flooding into Israel and the Sinai, Kissinger marveled at the mildness of the Arab reac-

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tion—save for the embargo, no confiscations, no riots, no reprisals against American interests of any sort. Sadat had concluded before the war was done that though America remained the arsenal of his enemy it wished also to be his friend; that the Russians could deliver arms but not peace; that for peace he needed the United States. Indeed, by waging war, Sadat finally seized Kissinger's fascinated attention.

Kissinger Meets Sadat

Their first encounter, on November 7, 1973—simply because it happened—was the food of history. Kissinger was apprehensive, for he was as dissimilar to Sadat as Talleyrand was to Wellington. Indeed, what greater contrast can we fancy than this plump Jewish professor in rumpled blue and the lean, brown, erstwhile terrorist in khaki who welcomed him amongst the gilded armchairs of Tahra Palace? Kissinger had brought Sisco and several other senior aides, but only to confer in the garden with Sadat's subordinates. Sadat he saved for himself; without even a note-taker, the two of them retired to talk tête-à-tête.

Kissinger was touched at once by Sadat's urbanity and charm; Sadat liked Kissinger's incisiveness, so refreshing after the naiveté of Rogers. However, the reports of their instant romance (soon to be dramatized by their public kissing) have been exaggerated. Essentially, we glimpse a pair of foxes, exchanging oaths of confidence, each of them intent on wielding the other for his own purpose. Sadat evoked his hostility to the Soviet Union, and urged that the United States and Egypt pursue a "common strategy" in the Middle East. They spoke of the peace conference, under joint Soviet and American auspices, envisioned by Resolution 338. Sadat urged a role for the Palestinians: Kissinger replied he would try to arrange some form of Palestinian participation—a significant departure from previous American indifference to the central role of the Palestinians in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The

swiftest way to peace, Sadat went on, was a swift implementation of Resolution 242, meaning a swift Israeli withdrawal from all of the Sinai. This was, of course, a maximum position, but Sadat imagined then that Kissinger could accomplish it, if not at once, in six months or a year at most.

Kissinger replied, "Look, I am a serious person. I shall keep what I can promise, but I shan't promise what I can't keep. If you expect from me broad and sweeping declarations, then I'm not your man." If Sadat persisted in voicing his demands in the ultimate language of Resolution 242, Kissinger continued, then the Israelis would not move an inch. Hinting that he sympathized with Sadat's objective of reclaiming all of the Sinai, just as he sympathized with Israel's insistence on security, he defined the ultimate goal as "mutually agreed borders" —a concept that eventually could accommodate Egypt's demand for sovereignty and Israel's for security. The ways and means to reconcile the two would be worked out in the peace conference, but there would never be a conference if Egypt insisted on a commitment from Israel for total withdrawal before negotiations started. "We must put aside irreconcilables for the moment," Kissinger said. "We must build confidence; conceive a negotiating dynamic. We must set in motion small agreements. We must proceed step by step."

But how was that possible, Sadat wondered, when the Israelis wouldn't even return to the lines of October 22? "Nobody knows where the lines of October 22 are," Kissinger retorted. "If I spend my capital with Israel on every point of the cease-fire, there won't be any left for the peace conference. Look, instead of wasting time on the October 22 lines, why don't we try for something bigger?" If Sadat would give him a few more weeks, Kissinger would try to negotiate a "disengagement" of the armies along the Suez Canal. He would try to move the Israelis off the western bank, then away from the canal and deeper into Sinai.

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Sadat puffed at his pipe, and brooded. He was under intense pressure in his own camp to rescue Suez and the Third Army; each hour counted. Fahmy had been adamant, but now Sadat overruled Fahmy and himself—and accepted Kissinger's proposition. This decision was crucial. It became the basis of their friendship, and the foundation of future American policy: it was at that moment that Kissinger decided he was dealing not with a clown but with a statesman. Moreover, Sadat accepted Kissinger's draft of six points, providing for a relief corridor to Suez and the Third Army, to be followed by a full exchange of prisoners. The modalities were to be determined by direct military talks between Israelis and Egyptians at Kilometer 101, the point on the Suez road where the Israelis sat entrenched, an hour's drive from Cairo's gates. Sisco would leave forthwith for Israel, to win Golda Meir's acquiescence. Finally, they agreed to re-establish full diplomatic relations, suspended during the Six-Day War.

The conversation was very cordial, and very tough. The Egyptians claim that weaving through the dialogue, like a barely visible thread, was Kissinger's implied threat that he would unleash the Israelis on the Third Army if Sadat did not defer to his suggestions.

When Kissinger emerged from Tahra Palace, it was with something the United States had never really possessed before—an Arab policy. Its essence was a commitment to the Arabs that, so long as they understood the United States would not abandon Israel, Washington would truly wield its power to regain Arab rights. Henceforth, Sadat was to serve as the keystone of that policy, the first recipient of whatever political, territorial, and financial favors Kissinger had the capacity to bestow. Henceforth, Kissinger would undertake no initiative in the Middle East without first consulting the president of Egypt. "The enemy of my enemy is my friend," the Arab proverb says. In a single meeting Sadat had rewritten it to read, "The friend of my enemy is my friend, too." Where this new friendship was to lead Egypt and America had yet to be perceived, but the hopes of both were gleaming as Kissinger's blue and white Boeing flew away from Cairo to the east.

More Haggling

Kissinger proceeded to Amman, thence to Riyadh: he was bombarded in both places by messages from Sisco. Golda Meir was balking at Kissinger's six points, in particular at the provisions for supplying Suez and the Third Army. She wanted to be certain that no weapons slipped through. Her protestations foreshadowed the haggling that was to feature all of Kissinger's future negotiations with the government of Israel. Words in the document were changed and rearranged, but no sooner was that accomplished than new messages descended from Israel and Egypt, each accusing the other of violating the six points Kissinger had imposed upon them. Sleepless and exhausted, Kissinger drove to the Royal Palace for a dramatic audience with Faisal ibn Abdel-Aziz ibn Abdel-Rahman al-Faisal al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia.

Faisal received him in the royal study, sitting on an overstuffed armchair amongst his robed entourage, beside a table with a white telephone. Kissinger had asked Sadat what to expect from this master of much of the world's oil and the mightiest Arab of a millenium. "Well, Dr. Henry," Sadat replied, "he'll probably preach to you about Communism and the Jews."

> *Kissinger:* I recall Your Majesty's visit to the United States early during President Nixon's administration, when Your Majesty pointed out to the president some of the dangers in the Middle East. Many of Your Majesty's prophecies have come true. I wish to explain our actions in the war of last month. Your Majesty may not approve, but he must know why we acted as we did. We were motivated by a desire to prevent an increase of Communist influence, and when the Soviets began to send in arms we had to react.

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As Kissinger spoke, the king hunched in his chair, his hooded head surmounted by a band of woven gold, his remarkable mouth frozen with distaste, his long, speckled fingers plucking at lint on his cloak. Kissinger was the Western secularist par excellence: Faisal was the incarnation of Wahhabism—that puritanical movement which preached a revival of Islamic simplicity and a fundamentalist fidelity to the precepts of the Koran forbidding all terrestrial pleasures save those of the marriage bed. When the king answered Kissinger, his voice was high-pitched, like a lamentation.

Faisal: Thank you for your explanation. I wish to remind you of what I said to President Nixon and to Secretary Rogers. It is essential to press Israel to withdraw from occupied territory. As you know, the Communists want the situation to remain critical. The United States used to stand up against aggression—you did that in World War II and in 1956 during the Suez war. If the United States had done the same after 1967, we would not have witnessed this deterioration. I speak as a friend, and I want you to know how painful it is for me to take steps which injure our friendship. . . . Israel is advancing Communist objectives. It is unfortunate that amongst those of the Jewish faith there are those who embrace Zionism. Before the Jewish state was established, there existed nothing to harm good relations between Arabs and Jews. There were many Jews in Arab countries. When the Jews were persecuted in Spain, Arabs protected them. When the Romans drove the Jews out, Arabs protected them. At Yalta, it was Stalin who said there had to be a Jewish state. It is necessary to establish in Palestine a mixed Jewish-Moslem state. Most of the immigration to Israel is from the Soviet Union, and they want to establish a Communist base right in the Middle East. Communists have no faith. They don't believe in God.

Kissinger: Your Majesty, our problem now is how to proceed from the present situation—which we know is intolerable—to genuine peace.

Faisal: That's easy. Make Israel withdraw.

Kissinger: I agree that there must be Israeli withdrawals, but this is a complicated problem for the United States—and not just a foreign policy problem. We have decided to make a major effort to achieve a settlement. We've made a beginning in Egypt, and we've agreed with President Sadat to convene a peace conference. We wish to establish good relations with all Arab countries that desire them with us. I mentioned Syria to Your Majesty at the dinner table.

Faisal: I asked a Syrian friend if Syria would object to a visit by Your Excellency. The Syrian said Syria would welcome him.

Kissinger: . . . Your Majesty will see that in the coming months we'll make a major effort to achieve progress.

Faisal: I hope it will only take weeks.

Kissinger: Well, that raises the question of Your Majesty's oil embargo. We understand the emotions that led to the embargo.

Faisal: That is why you must move as quickly as possible—so that we can rescind the embargo. It was very painful for me to have been forced to take this action against our American friends.

Kissinger: Your Majesty's decision had a serious effect, coming as it did from an old friend.

Faisal: That's why I've suffered even more than you have.

Kissinger: But now we face a new situation. Those who oppose peace seek to portray the Arabs as hostile to the United States. They are trying to turn opinion against our peace efforts. It will be difficult for us to go ahead if we face a continuing oil embargo. We can absorb the economic impact of the embargo, but the psychological impact worries me. I'd like to suggest that Your Majesty take steps to limit the application of the embargo.

Faisal: I should like to rescind it immediately. I, too, am in a difficult position. It would be easier if the United States would announce that Israel must withdraw and permit the Palestinians to return to their homes.

Kissinger: Such a dramatic announcement would produce very strong reactions. We must move step by step. I should like to urge Your Majesty to reflect. . . .

Faisal: Our predicament is the other side of the coin. The Communists are accusing some Arabs of bowing to American pressure. To those who accuse you of bowing to Arab pressure, you can reply that the only reason the Arabs are doing this is because you support the enemy of the Arabs.

Kissinger: Your Majesty, it doesn't work that way in the United States. Our best argument is not to say that we're anti-Israeli or pro-Arab, but that we want peace in the Middle East and that we're pursuing the interests of the United States. If we try to put it on the basis of the merits of the Arab-Israeli dispute, there will always be more people defending Israel than the Arab side. So we have to put it in terms of American national interests.

Faisal: I appreciate your reasoning, but I hope that you can appreciate ours. The embargo was a common decision of the Arab family. To urge an end of the embargo, I must be able to go to the other Arab governments with an argument. Therefore I need swift action from you. You need to announce your position.

Kissinger: If we announce this before negotiations, we will undermine our effectiveness in the negotiations. I don't want to promise anything I can't deliver.

An exchange of courtesies, and the conversation ended there—at an impasse. During the royal pronouncement on the Jews, Kissinger remained serene. Earlier, at dinner, it had been a bit more difficult to digest. The American ambassador to Riyadh, James Akins, sat separated from Kissinger by several senior princes; through the veil of robes and the click of coffee cups Akins caught snatches of the princes' discourse. ". . . Israel . . . Zionism . . . Jewish Communist conspiracy. . . ." On the way out, Kissinger whispered to Akins, in his deepest Teutonic accent, "That was your idea of light dinner conversation?"

And yet, whilst half of Faisal's head was filled with primitive rage against Jews and simplistic notions that with a wave of the hand Kissinger could dismiss the Israelis from Arab territory, the other half was exquisitely subtle. For all of its intransigence, his first audience with Kissinger contained the seeds of a remarkably compliant policy. The king's allusion to Syria was crucial. After the audience, Omar Saqqaf, the minister of state for foreign affairs, urged Kissinger to visit Damascus, revealing Faisal's conviction that Syria was the key to peace. In subsequent missions to Riyadh for more than a year thereafter, Kissinger practiced every persuasion to soften the Wahhabite pope. True, Faisal went on protesting about the Jews, and did not rescind the embargo until the spring, but in mid-December he promised Kissinger to do all he could to promote negotiations—particularly in Syria. Crucial. In fact, as time passed and it became clear to the king that he could not hope for total Israeli withdrawal quickly, he became the financier of Kissinger's interim diplomacy throughout the Middle East. He subsidized Sadat, seduced the Syrians, bribed the Beirut press. His horror of radicalization prevailed over his hatred of Zionism.

Besides, Faisal needed the United States to modernize his kingdom. Kissinger knew this, and he played the card shrewdly. On December 15, at the height of the oil embargo, he had a revealing conversation in Riyadh with Hisham Nazer, the minister of state for planning, and several important princes.

Nazer: When I was in Washington, I talked to Bill Simon about an American development mission to Saudi Arabia.

Kissinger: What kind of industries are you planning? How much of your population is rural and Bedouin?

Nazer: There is more of a shift to settlement and urban living.

Kissinger: I assume that the shift has political implications, since urban populations tend to be less traditional. How can the United States relate to the Saudi development process?

Nazer: There are two conditions. First, peace, and second, help in organizing our industrial sector. You can provide technology. Specifically, you have the technol-

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ogy of desert agriculture which we could use.

Kissinger: Are the present mechanisms for cooperation adequate?

Nazer: We've never had trouble going directly to the American private sector, but we need help in tapping the resources and technology of the United States government.

We glimpse here the essence of Kissinger's parallel Middle East policy; for, in fact, his diplomacy has always proceeded on two levels. The first level is the containment of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which he considers almost intractable. The second level is the promotion of American technology, which all of the Arabs (including the radicals) crave and which helps him to buy time whilst he copes with the first problem. In effect, he is saying to the Arabs, "I know what you want—your territory—and I'm working on it. Meanwhile I'll give you *everything else* you want to compete in the twentieth century." For the Saudis, this has meant a vast commitment by the U. S. government to play a major part in fashioning their infrastructure, and to sell them, over the years, arms worth many billions of dollars. Whole cantonments and towns have been and will be constructed for the Saudis by the U. S. Army corps of engineers (this began before Kissinger): today there are nearly 20,000 Americans in the kingdom: tomorrow there may be twice that. For the Egyptians, the parallel policy has meant American diplomatic support, American money, and encouragement of American investors and of the oil princes to rescue Cairo's economy—not to mention encouragement of the West Europeans to sell arms to Sadat, since it is also Kissinger's long-range plan to pre-empt the Soviet Union as the chief source of weaponry amongst the Arabs. The parallel policy has even succeeded to an extent in such militant states as Syria and Iraq, which still depend on the Russians for their guns but are as covetous of American technology as the Saudis and the Egyptians.

More Talks

Kissinger flew from Riyadh on November 9 to Peking to see Premier Chou En-lai and Chairman Mao Tse-tung. Whilst he was en route, Israel accepted his amended six points. The exchange of prisoners was consummated, but the military talks between Israelis and Egyptians at Kilometer 101 soon reached deadlock on the issue of Israeli withdrawals. The Israelis persisted in proposing a return to the lines of October 5, though now with the provision that the United Nations fill the vacuum of the retreating armies: the Egyptians demanded that Israel withdraw to the Mitla and Giddi passes. Kissinger returned to Washington only to conclude that he was needed urgently again in the Middle East.

On the eve of his departure, December 7, General Moshe Dayan, the Israeli minister of defense, called at the State Department. Dayan sought more weaponry—tanks, aircraft, armored personnel carriers—than Israel was already receiving. Kissinger put him off.

Dayan: Another thing bothers me. Israel's best card is our continuing occupation of the pocket west of the canal. If we have to pull our forces back from the canal, then we must receive something of real value—such as assurances of no more war.

Kissinger: You'll never get that in this phase. You're asking for the impossible.

Ambassador Dinitz spoke of the Israeli elections, now scheduled for late December—and of the Palestinians.

Dinitz: I have Golda's instructions to get an understanding between the United States and Israel on Geneva.

Kissinger: I'll be in touch with you, especially on the problem of Palestinian participation.

Dinitz: Golda cannot go into the elections if there's any doubt on the Palestinians at Geneva.

Kissinger repulsed the Israeli demand for

ly lighter, was reputed once to have called Sadat "that black donkey." Little in Sadat's previous career appeared to have prepared him for the presidency of Egypt or for the sublime ordeal of matching wits with Kissinger. He was a peasant of the Nile Delta, who told me 20 years ago that "the West hates the Arabs because they think we're Negroes."

More naturally sly than Nasser, more preternaturally Egyptian, Sadat had learned in the shadow of his master that in politics patience can be as sharp a tool as cunning. When he succeeded Nasser in 1970, his enemies assumed he was a half-wit. This seemed to serve his purpose. For seven months after his accession, real power in Egypt was wielded not by Sadat but by the intelligence services, headed by a clique of goons posing as Nasser's authentic heirs. Sadat built an alternative power base centered upon the army. Then, provoked by plots amongst the goons, he *pounced*—turning the government on its head, packing his rivals off to jail.

This was, as I wrote then, "a marvel of political craftsmanship, a masterly lesson of how to proceed, step by modest step, from impotence to supreme power." But it did not solve any of Sadat's external problems. By the time of Nasser's death it had become obvious to any lucid Egyptian that the two pillars of Nasserist policy—Arab socialism and dependence on the Soviet Union—had failed. Sadat knew that Egypt needed a new policy, but in struggling to concoct it he could not get anyone outside of Egypt—particularly the United States—to take him seriously. Kissinger, in practice, ignored Sadat's dramatic cries for help and clung to a cozy theory that the only strategic ally he needed in the Middle East was Israel. But now the war had shattered that supposition, and as his aircraft turned from the Mediterranean to descend upon the Nile Delta, Kissinger—no less than Sadat himself—was in search of a new policy.

For Kissinger had seemed indifferent to the Middle East until the October war. He had been cynical from the beginning about the plan launched in 1969 by William Rogers, his predecessor as secretary of state, when Rogers publicly endorsed substantial Israeli withdrawal from conquered territory in exchange for contractual peace from the Arabs. Privately he was contemptuous of Rogers, and he contributed to Nixon's decision that Rogers' endeavors should collapse quietly of exhaustion in the autumn of 1971. That eventually, after he replaced Rogers as secretary of state, Kissinger should adopt Rogers' policy of pursuing peace in the Middle East through interim agreements is not the least irony of his subsequent diplomacy.

"How About It, Dear Henry . . . ?"

Perceptive Arab diplomats recognized early during the Nixon years that real power in the administration reposed with Kissinger, not Rogers; a few urged Kissinger to undertake an active role in seeking a settlement. Ashraf Ghorbal, then chief of the Egyptian Interests Section in Washington (now ambassador), perhaps despairing of conventional diplomacy, tried his hand at doggerel, which he dispatched to Kissinger on the morrow of his first visit to Peking: "On one of my recent excavations/ I ran across an old exclamation/ It was in Amenhotep's tomb/ The god of medicine of ancient gloom/ It said, 'Come and visit my Nile'/ And you do not have to stand in file/ For your stomachaches I have a cure/ And for your headaches for sure/ How about it, dear Henry/ Shall we make the Middle East a double entry?" To an Arab statesman whose plea, though more prosaic, was essentially similar, Kissinger retorted, "I will never get involved in anything unless I'm sure of success. And if I do get involved it means I'm going to succeed. I hate failure." The Middle East, he mused to friends, "isn't ready for me."

Furthermore, Kissinger accepted and in

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immediate Egyptian nonbelligerency—it would bedevil him again and again—but he capitulated straight-away on the issue of the Palestinians. Faced with Israel's refusal to go to Geneva if the Palestinians were present, he instructed his ambassador in Cairo to inform Sadat that now he did not favor Palestinian participation at the convening of the peace conference. Israel would permit "safe" Palestinians of King Hussein's regime to sit on the Jordanian delegation, but would not tolerate a separate delegation dominated by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). In late November, the Arab summit meeting at Algiers had endorsed negotiations with Israel and designated the PLO as the "sole representative" of the Palestinians at Geneva. Yasir Arafat had arrived at Algiers from Moscow, where the Russians had prevailed upon him to accept the original United Nations plan of 1947 which partitioned Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. To demand the 1947 U.N. borders could only have been a negotiating position; but that Arafat was willing to advance it meant a de facto recognition of Israel's right to exist—as would his very presence at a peace conference with Israel. True, an invitation to Arafat to participate at Geneva would have provoked a violent debate within the PLO, and he might have demurred in the end; true, the Jordanians as well as the Israelis opposed the PLO. Nevertheless, in excluding the PLO from the start, Kissinger excluded from the process of peacemaking the very essence of the Arab-Israeli quarrel. This lost opportunity was lamentable, for as difficult as it may have been to confront the Palestinian dilemma in late 1973—on the morrow of the war when Arab confidence was high, when old rigidities were less inflexible and possibilities more fluid—it has become more difficult today.

In Cairo on December 13 and 14, Kissinger found Sadat distressed by his failure to arrange a role for the Palestinians at Geneva, but acquiescent. "We look upon you as the principal Arab leader," Kissinger reassured

him, "and our purpose is to strengthen your position—in Egypt and throughout the Arab world." They agreed that the first goal at Geneva would be to "disengage" the Egyptian and Israeli armies. Kissinger wished to convene the conference on December 18, but now he had to convince the Syrians to attend. He proceeded, on December 15, to Damascus at last.

Save for Iraq, no nation in Araby had so tempestuous a past as Syria: the Syrians seemed to be ungovernable. Their president, Hafez al-Assad, was a mountain boy of the north, the head of the Socialist Ba'ath, an Alawite who appointed other Alawites to key commands to maintain himself in power. Curious, since the Alawites number hardly more than a tenth of Syria's populace. Nominally they are a sect of Shi'a Islam, but in practice they may not even be monotheistic. Publicly they revere Ali, the husband of the Prophet's favorite daughter, Fatima; privately they worship him as the godhead. When praying, Alawites turn not to Mecca but to the sun, in whose eye Ali lives. The cult is clouded in secrecy and clandestine rites; Alawites will do anything to conceal their true convictions from Christians and orthodox Moslems alike. Persecuted for centuries, cunning became their armor.

Assad has ruled Syria longer than any of his predecessors, and ruled it rather well. Self-reliant and shrewd, humorous, stubborn, unforgiving, not very cultured, a night worker who never seemed to sleep, he learned much from his own mistakes. He balanced a precarious coalition of Sunni and Shi'a Moslems, Alawites and Christians, Nasserists, Communists, urban entrepreneurs, rural conservatives, extremist Ba'athi ideologues within and without the army. The militants amongst these constrained Assad almost as much as he constrained them, and on Israel they were implacable. Hatred of Israel was far more fierce in Syria than in Egypt. During the October war, the Syrians snatched back much of the Golan Heights, but then the Israelis counterat-

later stages. It's evident there won't be any settlement that you don't agree to. Now we must move into the disengagement phase.

Assad: Any disengagement must involve all of the Golan Heights.

Kissinger: That's out of the question. The first problem is the territory occupied in the October war—and whether Israel will withdraw from *that*.

Assad: Before Geneva convenes there ought to be a disengagement agreement.

Kissinger: For Israel, it's important that Syria provide a list of Israeli prisoners of war, permit the Red Cross to visit them, and release wounded prisoners.

Assad: Why should I give up this card? What am I getting for it? Brezhnev never mentioned that to me. The disengagement ought to involve the whole of Golan because Golan is very small.

Kissinger: Look, it took me four years to settle the whole Vietnamese war. You're asking for the impossible. I thought we were going to discuss the date for convening Geneva. What about the language regarding "other participants"?

Assad: Anything in that letter that you and President Sadat agree upon is agreeable to me.

Kissinger: But how will you answer the letter?

Assad: There should be disengagement before the conference convenes. The text of the letter is not accurate. It says Syria has agreed to attend the conference. I have not agreed.

But Kissinger Prevails. . .

Nor had Israel agreed. In Jerusalem the next evening and the day after, Kissinger debated Golda Meir and her senior advisers (Dayan, Abba Eban, Yigal Allon, Pinhas Sapir, Dinitz et al.) over the Syrian refusal to produce a list of prisoners of war (without it, Israel "would not go to Geneva"), the role of the United Nations at the conference (Israel insisted it be minimal), and the concessions Israel would need to make to Egypt to achieve a disengagement. The Israelis were unsatisfied with Kissinger's letter of invitation to the conference, and they dissected every phrase. Finally, Kissinger fell back upon a favorite device. "Accept the letter as it is," he told them, "and then explain your own interpretation in a statement to the Knesset."

Kissinger: If Sadat gets disengagement, he'll start economic reconstruction and reopen the canal—but he wants to keep some forces on the East Bank.

Meir: Why—if he wants peace?

Kissinger: His view is that he can't afford to withdraw from his own territory which he has reconquered. We have to relieve the oil embargo, the threat of renewed hostilities. Time is critical. Sadat will thin out his forces on the East Bank, limit arms in that area, and accept a buffer zone under the U.N. . . . . Look, Sadat has already changed his position. Initially he demanded El Arish, then the evacuation of the Sinai passes.

Meir (sharply): What you call disengagement is really just a withdrawal of Israeli forces, and there's nothing reciprocal about *that*.

Kissinger: He will restore the civil populace to the canal zone—a guarantee against hostilities.

Meir (passionately): What does Sadat say about peace? This is just the first step back to 1967. After this agreement everything will be the same—except the world will have its oil.

Kissinger (mischievously): That would make a big difference.

Kissinger prevailed. Nightmarish eleventh-hour complications followed, but the peace conference opened at Geneva on December 21. Israel was there, with Egypt and Jordan—but not the Syrians or the PLO. Officially, the conference was convened by Kurt Waldheim, the United Nations secretary-general, but—as the Israelis wished—he was but a decorous bystander. Nominally the co-chairmanship was shared by the United States and the Soviet Union, but the Russians were surprisingly serviceable and Kissinger stage-managed everything. Some foresaw the conference as a kind of Arab-

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tacked and marched beyond the Golan almost to the suburbs of Damascus.

Assad was prepared to accept the reality of Israel: he accepted U.N. Resolution 338 following Soviet assurances that Israel would withdraw from all occupied territory and recognize the rights of the Palestinians. But he was wary of Kissinger, whose gradualist diplomacy appeared to him as just another stratagem to strengthen Israel. Suspicion is perhaps the predominant Syrian trait. It hovered in the halls of the presidential palace on that evening of December when—beneath an oil painting of Saladin's victory over the Crusaders—Assad welcomed Kissinger and his party.

Typically, Kissinger began by being funny. Through the interpreter he said, "I should teach you English, Mr. President. You'll be the first Arab leader to speak English with a German accent. Did you meet Mr. Sisco? I had to bring him with me—if I left him in Washington he might mount a coup d'état." Assad laughed. Kissinger assumed that the Syrians, like other Arabs, were intrigued by his success with women, so he talked about women and repeated some lecherous pleasantries. There ensued a seminar on world affairs. Kissinger reverting to his role of Harvard professor—analyzing China, the Soviet Union, American domestic politics—the president of Syria his attentive pupil.

Kissinger: It's not our policy to divide the Arabs. I'll always tell everyone I talk to the same thing. We must have confidence in each other. We must get a peace conference started to establish a legal framework for negotiations. With that, we'll work for a disengagement agreement, first on the Egyptian front, then seek to do the same on the Syrian front. The immediate problem is the letter of invitation to the conference. What are your views?

Assad: They depend upon our talk today.

Kissinger: We have no peace plan of our own. It's easy to make specific proposals —the important thing is to take practical steps. We and the Soviets agreed only that there should be a peace conference. Eventually it will have to deal with all of the questions—withdrawals, security, borders, Jerusalem, and the Palestinians.

Kissinger produced his draft letter of invitation to the conference, to be sent simultaneously by the United States and the Soviet Union to the United Nations secretary-general. He pointed to the crucial sentence: "The parties have also agreed that the question of other participants from the Middle East area will be discussed during the first stage of the conference"—i.e., the Palestinians were to be excluded from the initial phase of negotiations.

Kissinger: Israel didn't want a reference to the Palestinians at this point. We recognize that you will not solve this problem without taking Palestinian interests into account, but we think it would be a mistake to take up the Palestinian question at the beginning of the conference.

Assad: I understood that an earlier text had referred to "the question of the Palestinians."

Assad was alluding to his exchanges with Sadat. Through interminable cups of Turkish coffee and sweet tea, the conversation dragged on; two and a half hours had been scheduled but after six hours they were still talking. Rattling his amber worry beads, Assad began a long exposition of Syrian policy, assailing the United States for its support of Israel.

Kissinger: I think we should talk now of the practical problems of convening the Geneva conference.

Assad: Does the United States agree, first, that Syria cannot surrender territory in a settlement; second, that there can be no settlement without a solution for the Arab people of Palestine; and third, is the purpose of the peace conference to carry out these two objectives, or to use up time without achieving a solution?

Kissinger: We're prepared to discuss with you the withdrawal of Israeli forces in the first stage, and we recognize that there would have to be further withdrawals in

Israeli Congress of Vienna, but in retrospect it amounted to little more than an international cartoon. Kissinger recognized the obstacles but voiced ambitious hopes: "Our final objective is the implementation in all its parts of Resolution 242. This goal has the full support of the United States.... The agony of three decades must be overcome ... to put an end to the conflict between peoples who have so often ennobled mankind." There was a squabble about seating arrangements, a predictable exchange of polemics between Ismail Fahmy and Abba Eban, but otherwise Kissinger's scenario was observed: after the ceremonial overture, an Egyptian-Israeli working committee embarked upon discussions of disengagement, and the conference adjourned—supposedly to come alive again soon after the Israeli elections. It has yet to reconvene.

"It was the most peculiar conference I ever attended," Zaid al-Rifai, the prime minister of Jordan, lamented to me recently. "I expected it would be based on Resolutions 242 and 338. But it had no terms of reference, no rules of procedure, and no agenda." Rifai requested a disengagement on the Jordan-Israeli front, but the conference broke up without considering that or the concerns of the Palestinians. In fact, on December 20, the day before the conference, Kissinger passed to the Israelis a secret and very significant "Memorandum of Understanding" promising that no other parties would be invited to future meetings at Geneva "without the agreement of the initial participants"—which meant an Israeli veto on participation by the PLO.

Rifai was not the first to suggest that Kissinger staged the conference mainly as pomp and circumstance, a public-relations drumroll for a mouse-sized marvel—the first Egyptian-Israeli disengagement. In justice to Kissinger, however, it should be remembered that *at the time* he considered Geneva might subsequently serve a useful purpose as the site for negotiations.

Golda Meir's government was returned to

power with a reduced majority; in early January 1974, Dayan returned to Washington. Though a "hawk," Dayan was the most creative of the Israeli leaders: implicitly he conceded an Israeli withdrawal into the Sinai, and now he produced his "five-zone" concept. The area of disengagement should cover five zones, he said—a U. N. buffer (zone one) between the Israeli and Egyptian armies, whose forces in those zones (two and three, respectively) would be severely limited. Beyond zones two and three there should extend on either side of the Suez Canal zones four and five, respectively, each 30 kilometers deep, where surface-to-air missiles would likewise be forbidden.

This became the conceptual foundation of the accord that was soon to follow. The idea was Dayan's, not Kissinger's. Dayan invited Kissinger to return to the Middle East; Kissinger contacted Sadat, who urged him to come at once. On January 12, in Aswan, where he was recovering from bronchitis, Sadat exhorted Kissinger to undertake an immediate "shuttle" and to conclude the disengagement forthwith. Kissinger had hitherto planned to mediate the principles, then defer to the Egyptian-Israeli military committee to resolve the particulars at Geneva. "Why Geneva?" Sadat asked. "You can do it all here."

Kissinger returned to Aswan the next day from Jerusalem: Sadat accepted Dayan's conceptual framework and added, "I won't quibble over details." In Washington and Jerusalem, Kissinger had already determined the scope of the Israeli withdrawal; now the problem focused on limitations of force. "It's difficult for me," Sadat said, "to sign a document which limits the forces in my own territory."

That afternoon, Kissinger proposed to enshrine the disengagement in two documents —a formal agreement to be signed by Israel and Egypt, and a separate letter from the United States to each government stating its understanding of the limitation of forces. The formal agreement would only

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allude to the limitations: the American letter would define them. With this sophistry, Sadat could claim that Israel had not *imposed* the limitations upon Egypt.

By evening, the American team had produced the two draft documents. The Egyptians refined them, then Kissinger flew to Israel. He negotiated mostly with Allon, Eban, and Dayan, because Golda Meir was ill with shingles. The Egyptians, exceedingly sensitive to force limitations, had asked Kissinger to camouflage Dayan's five-zone framework. They agreed to specify five zones in the agreement, but only three on the map—for Egypt, Israel, and the United Nations respectively. "All right," Dayan told Kissinger, "there will be three zones. We'll produce a new map you can take back to Aswan." The Israelis further dissected Kissinger's drafts, and with remarkable virtuosity Kissinger managed to accommodate their fixation on legalisms. We glimpse him scratching out, interpolating, scribbling all over the drafts: "Paragraph one could be divided into two paragraphs. The next three paragraphs—no problem. Paragraph five probably won't survive in this form. . . ."

By the fourth day of the shuttle, the agreement was assured. Some technicalities remained to be negotiated, but Kissinger was already quibbling with Dayan about the timing of the announcement: Dayan wanted to brief the Knesset first; Kissinger had a horror of leaks and wished to unveil his victory as a bombshell for the evening telecasts in the United States. The agreement was announced by Nixon at the White House on January 17, 1974 and signed by the Egyptians and Israelis at Kilometer 101 the next day—less than a week after Kissinger's appearance at Aswan.

It contained all of Dayan's essentials—indeed, Dayan can be called its secret father. The Israelis were to withdraw into the Sinai to a line roughly 15 miles from the Suez Canal, protected by a U.N. buffer, leaving the Egyptians a thin ribbon of territory on the East Bank, where reciprocally they would diminish their army from 60,000 to 7,000 men; symmetrically beyond either line, no missiles for 30 kilometers. Sadat gave no promise of nonbelligerency, but neither did he get a timetable for further Israeli withdrawals, and secretly he promised the United States to permit nonmilitary Israeli cargoes to transit the canal as soon as it was cleared. Additionally, Kissinger gave the Israelis a secret "Memorandum of Understanding" in which the United States conveyed Egypt's promise to clear the canal, rebuild its cities, and resume peacetime activities in that region. Egypt and Israel had accepted American aerial reconnaissance of the disengagement area; the memorandum concluded that "the United States will make every effort to be fully responsive on a continuing and long-term basis to Israel's military equipment requirements."

Kissinger's predominant emotion in this shuttle should be obvious—*it was easy*. He applied minimal pressure on either party, since both Israel and Egypt needed the agreement badly. Israel had to demobilize or face bankruptcy. Sadat had to save the Third Army and prove that the war had won him territory. Not that Sadat's subordinates were satisfied—Fahmy felt that Kissinger could have delivered more of the Sinai; General Mohammed el-Gamasy, the chief of staff, considered the agreement militarily unsound. But then, like Kissinger's subordinates, they were treated as mere technicians, and entrusted only with details. In Israel, the agreement required approval by the cabinet; but Sadat made every crucial decision alone with Kissinger.

The Syrian Disengagement

The swift success of the Israeli-Egyptian disengagement confirmed Kissinger's belief that step-by-step diplomacy was the best—indeed the only—method for containing the Arab-Israeli conflict. By now, Egyptians and Jews were well schooled in the dynamics of that method. Kissinger avoided essence—viz., the Palestinian problem—and clung

to the periphery; for in his view, rearrangement of the periphery alone was possible. On the periphery he encouraged the belligerents themselves to provide the points of reference; that done, he identified the components, then skillfully composed them. His great function—he has said so many times—was to explain persuasively to either party the constraints upon the other.

The disengagement also helped to kill the Geneva conference. Sadat was loath to negotiate with Israel alone; he could not risk returning to Geneva until Syria, like Egypt, had regained some territory in disengagement. Moreover Israel—tormented by a cabinet crisis—was in no mood to negotiate affairs of substance. En route home from Aswan, at Sadat's behest, Kissinger called again at Damascus, where he found Assad furious at Sadat for accepting disengagement but more willing now to consider disengagement for himself. Assad reduced his demands, and asked for only half of Golan. This gave Kissinger a point of reference: he passed it to the Israelis, who refused to negotiate until Assad produced his list of Israeli prisoners. Kissinger returned to Damascus in February, then delivered the list to Golda Meir. Israel and Syria dispatched negotiators to Washington, where Kissinger found their positions still far apart.

Meanwhile, Kissinger was grappling with the oil embargo. As part of his bargain with Kissinger for the Sinai disengagement, Sadat endeavored to persuade the oil princes to end the boycott, but his good offices were not enough. During December and January, Nixon and Kissinger played "impeachment politics" with the Saudis, warning that the embargo would weaken the embattled president and diminish his power to promote peace. The warning was buttressed by murky hints of American military intervention in the Persian Gulf. When neither ploy worked, Kissinger threatened to publish previous correspondence with the Saudis which might embarrass them before the other Arabs. At Riyadh, Ambassador Akins had already

clashed with Kissinger in November, threatening to resign should Kissinger exclude him from the audience with Faisal; Kissinger had relented. Now Akins refused to convey Kissinger's message to the king, and sought out Omar Saqqaf, the minister of state, instead. Saqqaf warned against informing the king: Saudi Arabia, he suggested, could also publish correspondence which might embarrass the United States. Kissinger reconsidered, and the message Akins transmitted to Faisal was more gracious.

But Kissinger sustained his pressure. Though the Arabs had vowed to lift the embargo only when Israel withdrew completely, by February they were alarmed by Europe's penury and plagued with doubt. Syria urged a prolongation, but the oil princes sent Saqqaf and Fahmy to Washington to strike a bargain: Do something for Syria, they told Nixon and Kissinger, and the embargo will stop. Kissinger promised to try; in March the embargo was suspended. Kissinger subsequently denied the "linkage," but, in fact, his Syrian shuttle was the price he paid to end the embargo.

Kissinger returned to the Middle East on the last day of April, calling first at Alexandria to see Sadat, by now his chief adviser on Arab affairs. Throughout the negotiations that followed, Sadat urged Assad to accept "Dr. Henry's" definition of the possible. In Jerusalem, on May 2, the Israelis were ready only to divide the salient they had captured in October, retaining half of it for themselves and the whole of Golan, too. Moreover, the matter was vexed by internal Israeli politics—Mrs. Meir would remain in office only long enough to negotiate the disengagement, to be succeeded by Yitzhak Rabin as prime minister. General Mordechai Gur, the new chief of staff, began with a military briefing that stressed Israel's strategic need to maintain positions on Mount Hermon, which abutted the Heights on the north and overlooked Damascus, and the hills near Kuneitra, which dominated the rest of Golan.

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Kissinger: This problem cannot be dealt with in military terms alone. This is a geopolitical problem, and you must weigh the alternatives you'll face if we fail to get a disengagement.

Gur: But the Israeli settlements are almost against the prewar line.

Kissinger: This isn't an argument that will carry weight with world opinion. Those settlements are in occupied territory.

Privately, Kissinger has described the Golan settlements as "the worst mistake the Jews have made in 2,500 years."

Kissinger: The minimum essential for the Syrians is to get back Kuneitra.

Meir: None of our neighbors—certainly not Syria—is prepared to negotiate real peace. All the Syrians want to talk about after two wars in six years is the disengagement of forces—so we can't just brush aside the military arguments of our chief of staff. Besides, regimes change in the Arab world. Suppose something happens to Sadat and someone more anti-Israeli and pro-Soviet comes to power? What happens then to all these agreements?

Kissinger: In that case a great deal would depend on how reasonable Israel has been in negotiations. The extent to which the United States could help you would depend on the nature of the crisis and how it came about.

This is one of the basic arguments Kissinger has constantly wielded with the Israelis—the scope of future American commitments to Israel will be determined by Israel's readiness to rise above narrow military advantage and take risks for political reasons. But in this conversation, he could not even get them to propose a line closer to Kuneitra, the old capital of the Golan Heights near the cease-fire line of 1967. With no more than an agenda from the Israelis—prisoner exchange, nature of the U.N. buffer zone, etc.—Kissinger saw Assad in Damascus the next day. He explained Israel's unstable internal situation, then asked about Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, who was expected soon in Damascus:

Kissinger: I can see the scenario. The foreign minister will meet Gromyko at the airport, then take him to lunch. Then they will make a statement condemning the United States and "partial solutions." Then Syria will get some more MIG-23s.

Assad was amused. Kissinger's eyes came to rest on Abdel Halim Khaddam, Assad's radical and rather handsome young foreign minister. "Such pretty blue eyes," he said. "Won't you come back with me to Israel? I want to fix you up with Golda." Presently he produced the Israeli map, with its proposed line dividing the salient. "It does not seem," Assad replied angrily, "that Israel wants peace. Unacceptable."

Kissinger returned to Jerusalem, and urged the Israelis to be realistic. For weeks the Syrians had been waging a war of attrition across their lines with Israel; the cease-fire, Kissinger's diplomacy itself, were at stake.

Kissinger: It's necessary to give back Kuneitra, plus a bit of the areas west of the pre-October line. We need a line that's negotiable, or the negotiations will collapse very soon. Israel should understand the Syrians' perception. You're sitting on their territory.

Meir (angrily): We didn't just get up one day in 1967 after all the shelling from the Heights and decide to take Golan away from them. In October we had 800 killed and 2,000 wounded in Golan alone—in a war *they* started. They say this is *their* territory. Eight hundred boys gave their lives for an attack the Syrians started. Assad lost the war—and now we have to pay for it because Assad says it's *his* territory!

Kissinger: Each side has its own definition of justice. Remember what this is all about—to keep the negotiating process alive, to prevent another round of hostilities which would benefit the Soviet Union and increase pressure on you, on us, and on Sadat to rejoin the battle. . . .

Dayan: Maybe we could divide Kuneitra.

Kissinger: It won't work.

Meir: There's a cabinet meeting tomorrow—we must ask for authority to pro-

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pose a new line. We'll have a big fight in the Knesset and with our people who live in Golan.

Kissinger encountered some of the Golan settlers outside his hotel, screaming "Jew boy go home!"—a reference, apparently, to Nixon's reputed remark describing Kissinger in that idiom. The cabinet relented, and Golda Meir proposed a new line. The concept, of course, came from Dayan, soon to relinquish his defense portfolio. Now the government agreed to give back the salient and a slice of Kuneitra, proposing to divide that city into three zones—for Israel, the United Nations, and Syria respectively. In Damascus, Assad rejected this proposal. For the next three weeks, Kissinger shuttled back and forth struggling to reconcile the contradictions. By May 12, he was so exasperated with the Israelis he said, "Assad is no longer demanding half of Golan—we're negotiating on your line, and you're arguing about a few kilometers or a few hundred yards here and there. If we didn't have this negotiation, there'd be an international forum for the 1967 frontiers." The Israelis improved their map slightly, but not enough to satisfy Assad—"he must have some breathing space around Kuneitra," Kissinger told them. Israel insisted on retaining the hills outside Kuneitra; this outraged the Syrians. On May 13, Kissinger warned the Israelis the negotiation might collapse.

The next day, to Assad and his chief aides, Kissinger tried to put the best face upon the Israeli proposal. "There are demonstrators in the streets," he said, "crying 'Don't give up an inch of Golan!' Look, the Israelis have made considerable concessions—no salient, back to the pre-October line, and now they'll get out of all of Kuneitra and draw the line at the edge of the town. There will be Syrian civilians inside Kuneitra." Assad protested, "They're making Kuneitra a pocket surrounded by Israelis north, south, and west. Unacceptable."

On May 15, Palestinian guerrillas attacked Maalot, killing 16 Israeli adolescents;

this hardened the cabinet. Next morning, to the Israeli negotiators, Kissinger expressed his sorrow, and presently—perhaps to relieve the tension—told a story about his masseur at the King David Hotel.

Masseur: We support your efforts. We must have peace.

Kissinger: What are you willing to give up for peace?

Masseur: Nothing. Not an inch.

Kissinger: Shall I break off the negotiations?

Masseur: Absolutely not. I would give up 10 years of my life for peace.

Kissinger: How many kilometers would you give up?

Masseur: Not a kilometer.

This exchange, Kissinger mused, echoed the attitude of the Israeli government. In desperation, throwing out an idea that had emerged from discussions with his staff, he suggested that perhaps Israel could continue cultivating the fields around Kuneitra—so long as they were demilitarized and placed within the U.N. zone.

Allon and Rabin picked this up, promising to discuss it with the cabinet. Kissinger's idea revived the negotiations, for it became the basis of the crucial Israeli concession. But for another fortnight, the haggling did not cease. On May 23, in conference with the Israelis, Kissinger contrasted Sadat and Assad: "Sadat has a fixed determination to overcome obstacles and move toward peace. He makes big moves and breaks impasses. With Assad, each issue when you get to it becomes major, and you have to bargain over every point. It's so time-consuming! Sadat makes command decisions. Assad had his lieutenants there, and I had to convince them, too." In describing Assad, Kissinger was also describing the Israelis to themselves.

So the haggling went on—and with it the war of attrition. In Damascus, recently, Assad told me that during the negotiation "the Israelis were exploiting Dr. Kissinger's

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aircraft when he took off from Tel Aviv toward the sea. Their warplanes flew in the shadow of his wings, and at a certain point they parted—then struck at targets in our territory." The haggling went on—about the location of the line, the cultivation of the fields, a village here, a crossroads there, the width of the buffer zone, the limitation of forces and artillery (another American letter to resolve that!), the length of the U.N. mandate, the exchange of prisoners wounded and unwounded, the quantity of Syrian police to be permitted in Kuneitra. The Syrians wished only observers in the buffer zone; the Israelis insisted on an armed force; the issue was resolved by calling them both—the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). The talks nearly collapsed again at least twice, and Kissinger kept threatening to go home. Nixon—who needed the agreement as much as anybody—told him to stay, and started calling up Golda Meir. An audacious poker-player, constantly bluffing to improve the pot, Assad retracted his previous assent to the Israeli line. On May 27, Assad and Kissinger composed a communiqué announcing the collapse of the negotiations. On the way to the door, Assad touched Kissinger's hand and said, "What a pity. We've come so far and we've not succeeded. Can't anything be done about the line? Go back to Jerusalem—and try again."

Two days later, the agreement was achieved. It was modeled on the Israeli-Egyptian disengagement—in effect, five zones, embracing the U.N. buffer; two zones of 10 kilometer depth for Israel and Syria each where troops, artillery, and tanks were severely limited; symmetrical zones 20 kilometers deep where missiles were proscribed. The new Israeli line roughly corresponded to the cease-fire demarcation of 1967, except that Syria regained Kuneitra, which was placed inside the buffer zone. Just beyond the town's periphery, the Israelis could continue to cultivate the fields within the buffer, and they retained their

settlements and the strategic hills. American memoranda were conveyed to both sides: Syria had refused to agree in writing to prohibit "paramilitary" (Palestinian) operations from its soil, so the letter to Israel sanctioned—in the event of such incursions—Israeli retaliation.

In the euphoria of the achievement—hailed then as the diplomatic miracle of our time—the torment of the experience almost seemed to be forgotten. Kissinger had spent nearly five weeks away from Washington, struggling as well during sleepless days and nights to run the entire State Department from his Boeing or the King David Hotel. Privately, Kissinger described the Syrians and Israelis as "the only peoples in the Middle East who deserve each other"—but in fact he did not feel quite that way about Hafez Assad or Golda Meir. He admired Sadat, and respected Faisal, but he grew fond of Assad. This Syrian fascinated Kissinger as the embodiment of that Arab romanticism he used to curse, as a sometimes too simplistic man of steel who could compete with him on his own terrain of humor and dissimulation, as a despot of high principle who in fundamentals—for all his Alawite cunning—said what he meant and meant what he said.

As for Golda Meir, Assad observed to me that "one of the weaknesses I discovered in Dr. Kissinger was his special love of that woman. It struck me as strange that this university professor and secretary of state was unable to conceal such a furious affection. And for your information he used to describe her as 'Miss Israel.'" Golda Meir's tantrums, her volcanic obstinacy, drove Kissinger crazy—but there was no doubt of his deep affection. She was a woman of steel, and she alone in Israel, once her word was given, could enforce discipline and deliver the cabinet. Now she was stepping down, but in the year to come Kissinger would yearn for Miss Israel.

The Israeli-Syrian disengagement marked the high noon of Kissinger's gradualist di-

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plomacy in the Middle East. Thereafter we begin to observe lengthening shadows, faltering steps, frustration, recrimination, paralysis, and doubt.

Significant Promises

In mid-June, Kissinger returned to the Middle East—with Nixon. Nixon's tour was largely ceremonial, undertaken not only to dramatize the American commitment to peace but to portray the president in his statesman's toga as he struggled to elude impeachment. Nevertheless, during his peregrination, Nixon made significant promises to the Arab chiefs of state.

They involved the American interpretation of Security Council Resolution 242. On the territorial dimension of 242, Kissinger has commonly been accused of making contradictory promises to Arabs and Israelis, but, in fact, such duplicity is difficult to establish. He had stated often that the United States would labor for the fulfillment in all its clauses of that ambiguous resolution, but he was evasive when anyone asked him to define it. On May 18, 1974, when pressed by President Assad, Kissinger replied, "My predecessor once stated publicly his interpretation of 242, and for four years he was beaten over the head. Obviously, for a settlement you have to agree, but for us to take a position on final borders would destroy our capacity to conduct negotiations." He said essentially the same to Sadat and to the Saudis. Certainly Kissinger *allowed* the Arabs to think he favored complete or substantial Israeli withdrawal. In January 1974, Sadat told me, "I have assurances from Kissinger" on total withdrawal, but this may have been Sadat's wishful exegesis of "Dr. Henry's" conundrum.

Kissinger's replies to the Israelis resembled his opacity with the Arabs. On May 2, 1974, Rabin and Eban probed him for his views on final borders. "I can't predict how it will all come out," he answered. "What's important is the process itself—to keep negotiations going, to prevent them from freezing." Kissinger was more explicit in a meeting on December 6, 1973 with American Jewish intellectuals. Then, according to an Israeli journal which published the notes of participants, he said Israel would not have to withdraw to her 1967 borders; he believed that more favorable borders would be agreed upon in the negotiations. But even on that occasion, he stressed that Israel would be obliged to return "substantial territories."

Perhaps preoccupied by presentiments of doom, Nixon was uncomfortable in Cairo. Before the mob, he was convivial with Sadat, but that was mostly theater. Privately, the two presidents groped for words; their silences were long and awkward. But Nixon did tell Sadat that the American objective in the Sinai was to restore the old Egyptian international border. Kissinger was sitting there when Nixon said it. Afterward, also in Kissinger's presence, the president informed President Assad and King Hussein respectively that the United States favored the substantial restitution of the 1967 frontiers on the Golan Heights and on the West Bank of the Jordan within the framework of a general peace.

President Ford reaffirmed Nixon's position on the 1967 frontiers to Sadat last June in Salzburg. Of course the Arabs want all of this in writing, but that is the sort of memorandum Nixon and Ford and Kissinger have—so far—refused to render up to them. Anyway, why this change of tactics? As the clock continued to tick after the conclusion of the war, and Israel stood firm upon most of her conquests, the Americans evidently sought to sustain their credibility with the Arabs by resorting once again to verbal reassurances.

Across the Jordan

Are words worth anything—to Jordan, for example? The Hashemite Kingdom, and the Palestinians who resided there and in parts beyond, assumed a critical importance

during the final summer of Nixon's presidency—though curiously Kissinger did not seem to notice.

Kissinger, like Nixon and President Johnson before him, took Hussein for granted. Jordan, after all, was nearly an American protectorate; but unlike Israel it possessed no American constituency and thus had to be content with whatever scraps Washington might care to cast its way. In 1967, Hussein had lobbied amongst the other Arabs for their acceptance of Resolution 242, in return for which he received hollow promises from Johnson (then Nixon) that the United States would persuade Israel to disgorge its conquests.

Of the Arab leaders, Hussein alone knew Kissinger before the October war, for he visited Washington regularly: Kissinger liked him, and flattered him, each time they met, for his fortitude in the crisis with the Palestinian *fedayin* in 1970. Though not a belligerent in the October conflict, Hussein expected his old friend to redeem Nixon's promises and to include Jordan in his new diplomacy. Kissinger's original scheme for Geneva, once Israel and Egypt were disengaged, was to disengage the Syrian and Jordanian fronts, then assemble all of the parties to fashion a final settlement. This scenario was undone by the delays of the Syrian disengagement, by rivalry amongst the Arabs, Israeli obstruction, and Kissinger's own miscalculations.

In January 1974, Hussein and Rifai presented Kissinger with a map proposing an Israeli withdrawal from the Jordan River eight to ten kilometers into the West Bank: the king was prepared for a phased retreat, demilitarization of the zone, inspection by the United Nations. Kissinger passed the map to the Israelis, who rejected it. In late spring, Israel proposed, instead, not military disengagement, but a final political settlement with Jordan. The proposition was humiliating, not even serious. Israel would retain Arab Jerusalem, important portions of the West Bank, a defensive frontier along

the river—and return the remaining balloons, sausages, and corridors to Jordan, intermeshing them with the Israeli army, creating an Arab Lesotho. Hussein refused.

Following the Syrian disengagement, the Jordanians warned Kissinger that either they rapidly regain the West Bank or the PLO would pre-empt their claim. Distracted by the dénouement of Watergate, Kissinger was dithered—with Nixon paralyzed, he was unable to press Israel. Shortly after Nixon's resignation in August, Hussein visited Washington, where Kissinger and Ford assured him that disengagement in the Jordan valley shared equal priority with another disengagement in the Sinai. The king was elated, but from past experience he should have known better; moreover, he did not reckon upon the intrigues of his Egyptian cousins. Ismail Fahmy was in Washington, too. The Egyptians, coveting a second Israeli withdrawal soon, pleaded their preeminence over the Hashemites.

By October, the growing international prominence of the PLO aroused Kissinger's alarm. He was not innately hostile to Palestinian aspirations, but he considered the PLO a pot of contradictions; its moderates immobilized by radicals, its policies the hostage of rhetoric and illusion. Its leader, Yasir Arafat, was like a cyclist atop a tightrope, yearning perhaps to descend to earth but urged by his disciples to pedal up to heaven—to the unattainable secular Palestine. Granted, in negotiations Arafat might accept a smaller part of paradise—Gaza and the West Bank—but until he put his house in order why should Kissinger do him favors? Besides, even supposing a rump Palestine was possible, the notion did not enchant Kissinger. His history books had taught him that such miniature principalities breed irredentist passions, cause subsequent explosions, provoke dangerous quarrels between great powers. The Palestinians might have their state, but only as part of Jordan—the very goal that Kissinger had failed to advance.

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Kissinger flew to Cairo on October 9, not only to discuss new Sinai negotiations with Sadat, but to solicit his support for Jordan at the imminent Arab summit conference. Sadat promised to try, but in the event he did not try hard. At Rabat, a fortnight later, the Arab kings and presidents asked Hussein about commitments from Kissinger and prospects of Israeli withdrawal from the River Jordan. Hussein held up his empty hands. With that admission, his case collapsed. Led by Syria, the other Arab governments anointed the PLO as the new sovereign of the West Bank, conferring upon the Palestinians the metaphysical right to resolve their own future. In fact, this suited Egypt, for it protected Sadat on his Palestinian flank as he pursued his own national interests and maneuvered to negotiate again with Israel. Secretly, the summit approved a resolution recommending a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank, along the borders of 1967; the PLO acquiesced. But with Jordan out of the running, and with no prospect in the near future of Israel sitting with the PLO, Kissinger perforce would favor the Sinai as the site of his next negotiation.

Rabat was the first major defeat for Kissinger since the October war—and a major brake on interim diplomacy. During subsequent visits to Amman, he has lamented to the king and to Rifai his own failure, whilst there was still time, to restore the West Bank to Jordan.

"So you made a mistake," Rifai said.

"We miscalculated," Kissinger replied, "our manipulative capabilities." (That is the Jordanian version. In the American version Kissinger tells Rifai, "*You* miscalculated our manipulative capabilities.")

On the morrow of Rabat, Kissinger returned to Cairo. Sadat was ill with influenza, and received his guest clad in a dressing gown in the bedroom of his residence at Giza. Gone was the bonhomie of previous visitations, the gracious exchange of flattery ("We could never have come this far, Mr. President, without your statesmanship. . ." "Dr. Henry, you are my favorite magician") for now both men were embarrassed. Sadat had failed to repulse the PLO's claim to the West Bank: Kissinger's diplomacy was bogged down and his credibility was beginning to vanish. At Rabat the other Arabs, in Cairo some of his own advisers, kept warning Sadat that "Kissinger is playing games with you." Increasingly, Sadat was gnawed by doubt, by suspicion of Kissinger's intentions. Kissinger had no mind to lose the anchor of his Arab policy, and after ritual pleas for confidence he promised to pursue another Israeli retreat in the Sinai. Sadat sought the Mitla and Giddi passes, his oil fields on the Red Sea, and he would accept nothing less.

Nonbelligerency

That, Kissinger knew, would not be easy to achieve. Rabat and its repercussions—Arafat at the United Nations, for example—outraged the Israelis. For another withdrawal, Rabin required a pact of nonbelligerency from Sadat: Israeli strategists talked openly of separating Egypt from Syria and of removing Egypt from the Arab-Israeli conflict. Even for nonbelligerency, Rabin seemed to be in no hurry. Kissinger and his aides suspected now that tactically the paramount Israeli purpose was to delay and prolong whatever negotiation he might favor. In a revealing interview with *Haaretz* on December 3, 1974 Rabin stated that "the central aim of Israel should be to gain time"—up to seven years, the period essential to Europe and the United States to free themselves from dependency on Arab oil. During that interval Israel would continue to seek partial agreements, but he implied it would avoid a total settlement until the United States was no longer constrained by the need for oil to impose conditions that Israel found unpalatable. In this interview, Rabin did not insist on Egyptian nonbelligerency; as the winter progressed, however, right-wing pressure intensified in the

Knesset and nonbelligerency became his sine qua non.

In February 1975, Kissinger returned to the Mideast, where he found the Egyptian and Israeli positions still irreconcilable. In Jerusalem, and in Washington for the next three weeks, he exhorted the Israelis again and again to recognize the constraints upon Sadat—that Sadat could not risk a rupture with the other Arabs, that nonbelligerency could only come with final peace and was unattainable at this stage. The Israelis were either unconvinced or prepared, for the purpose of gaining time, to hazard an abortive negotiation. An eminent Israeli official told me that shortly before the March shuttle he took Kissinger aside and said, "Henry, you must be under no illusions. Israel will never withdraw from the Sinai passes for anything less than full nonbelligerency from Egypt." Kissinger assumed this was a negotiating postion; subsequently he said that the Israelis softened on nonbelligerency then hardened again when he reached Jerusalem —that they brought him back to the Middle East with premeditated deception.

In Jerusalem on March 9, Rabin began the new negotiation by outlining to Kissinger seven points as the basis of the Israeli position—briefly, Egypt must agree to practical steps toward peace, to terminate the use of force, to resolve the "dilemma of vagueness about duration." Israel would refuse to discuss a new line in the Sinai until Egypt had replied positively.

Kissinger was dismayed, for it was obvious that the Israelis were demanding nonbelligerency. Under point two—practical steps toward peace—they sought Egypt's disavowal of the Arab boycott, and the free movement of peoples between the two nations. Under point three—the "non-use of force"—they sought a formal "renunciation of belligerency clearly and in its appropriate legal wording." They required many features of a final peace, though after their withdrawal they would remain in possession of most of the Sinai.

In the ensuing days, at Aswan, Kissinger persuaded Sadat to offer Israel the "functional equivalent" of nonbelligerency in the military sense—no resort to force until the agreement, renewable annually, was superseded by another. On the political level, Sadat agreed to diminish the boycott and hostile propaganda, and to permit a limited communion of peoples—though this dimension would be de facto, not a promise he could commit to paper. But the Israelis continued to demand formal nonbelligerency, and they refused to draw a new line in the Sinai. "The Israelis," Sadat told Kissinger, "should be under no illusions that they will remain in the passes." That—and Sadat's insistence on free access to the oil fields at Abu Rudeis and its environs—was Egypt's final word. At the end, in exchange for Sadat's "nonrecourse to force," the Israelis offered to withdraw halfway into the Mitla and Giddi passes and to restore the oil fields in an enclave reachable by a U.N. road. Sadat refused.

During the negotiation, Kissinger complained bitterly to Sadat, and to Assad and Hussein in side trips to their capitals, about the intransigence of the Israelis. "You can't believe what I'm going through," he said. Perhaps in speaking thus Kissinger sought also to ingratiate himself with the Arabs, but his aides insist he was at his wit's end. At that moment Indochina was collapsing; détente was tenuous; American power was waning in Turkey, in Portugal, and elsewhere in the West. Now the Israelis, vexed with his pressure to make concessions, were taking aim at Kissinger himself. "They're trying," he told the Arab leaders, "to bring me down." At the eleventh hour, Ford wrote to Rabin, warning were he not more flexible American policy toward Israel would be drastically reassessed—but it was too late.

On Saturday, March 22, after sunset of that sabbath, Kissinger conferred with the Israelis in two final, dramatic meetings—from 6:30 PM to 8:15 PM and from 10:35 PM to 12:05 AM. Rabin, Allon, Gur, Di-

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nitz, and Minister of Defense Shimon Peres faced Kissinger, Sisco, Assistant Secretary Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary Harold H. Saunders, and Ambassador Kenneth Keating.

Allon: We'd still like to negotiate an interim or overall agreement, but not on the basis of an ultimatum from the other side.

Kissinger: There was no ultimatum. In the absence of new Israeli ideas, we received no new Egyptian ideas. We have no illusions. The Arab leaders who banked on the United States will be discredited. Step-by-step has been throttled, first for Jordan, then for Egypt. We're losing control. We'll now see the Arabs working on a united front. There will be more emphasis on the Palestinians, and there will be a linkage between moves in the Sinai and on Golan. The Soviets will step back onto the stage. The United States is losing control over events, and we'd all better adjust ourselves to that reality. The Europeans will have to accelerate their relations with the Arabs. If the interim agreement in 1971 had succeeded there would have been no war in October 1973. The same process is at work here. We just don't have a strategy for the situation ahead. Our past strategy was worked out carefully, and now we don't know what to do. There will be pressures to drive a wedge between Israel and the United States, not because we want that but because it will be the dynamic of the situation. Let's not kid ourselves. We've failed.

Allon: Why not start it up again in a few weeks?

Kissinger: Things aren't going to be the same again. The Arabs won't trust us as they have in the past. We look weak—in Vietnam, Turkey, Portugal, in a whole range of things. Don't misunderstand me. I'm analyzing this situation with friends. One reason I and my colleagues are so exasperated is that we see a friend damaging himself for reasons which will seem trivial five years from now—like 700 Egyptian soldiers across the canal in 1971. I don't see how there can be another American initiative in the near future. We may have to go to Geneva for a multilateral effort with the Soviets—something which for five years we've felt did not offer the best hope for success. I had assumed that when Geneva reconvened everybody would look to us to propose the way of success. But that won't be so now.

Allon: The Egyptians really didn't give very much.

Kissinger: An agreement would have enabled the United States to remain in control of the diplomatic process. Compared to that, the location of the line eight kilometers one way or the other frankly does not seem very important. And you got all the military elements of nonbelligerency. You got the "non-use of force." The elements you didn't get—movement of peoples, ending of the boycott—are *unrelated* to your line. What you didn't get has nothing to do with where your line is. . . .

Peres: It is a question not just of the passes, but of our military [intelligence] installations that have no offensive purpose and are necessary. The previous government couldn't overcome the psychological blow—that the Syrians and Egyptians launched a surprise attack. We need an early warning system. We need 12 hours of warning. Under the proposed arrangement, we'd only have six. If there had been any Egyptian concessions regarding the duration of the agreement and the warning system, then what you've said would be very touching. But then we would have faced new negotiations with Syria. . . .

Kissinger: This is a real tragedy. We've attempted to reconcile our support for you with our other interests in the Middle East, so that you wouldn't have to make your decisions all at once. Our strategy was to save you from dealing with all those pressures all at once. If we wanted the 1967 borders we could do it with all of world opinion and considerable domestic opinion behind us. The strategy was designed to protect you from this. We've avoided drawing up an overall plan for a global settlement. I see pressure building up to force you back to the 1967 borders—compared to that, 10 kilometers is trivial. I'm not angry at you, and I'm not asking you to change your position. It's tragic to see people dooming themselves to a course of unbelievable peril.

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Rabin (wryly): This is the day you visited Masada.

Other Americans at the meeting described the atmosphere as "eerie." The Israelis were passive as Kissinger spoke: now they did not quibble. It was almost as though, from the very first, they wanted no agreement; as though they had determined to demolish —for a time—step-by-step diplomacy. The Israelis were distraught by the Arabs' riches and by their rising power. The United States was weak; Ford was weak; so was Kissinger. In its weakness, America might even sacrifice Israel to satisfy the Arabs. American weakness was one thing, Israeli resolution quite another, and now Israel intended to be strong.

Israel's perception was one thing, Kissinger's quite another. Rabin was not strong, he was clumsy and indecisive. Before the negotiation he had discarded nonbelligerency, but then the Likud challenged him in the Knesset, and he embraced it again. Perhaps Rabin agreed with Kissinger, but it was Peres who dominated this negotiation. Ambitious, dogmatic, rather superficial, he was the strong man, ready to risk the disasters Kissinger conjured up. Peres was vastly more popular in Israel than Rabin and Allon together, and beneath his shadow their misgivings could not prevail. Kissinger longed for Golda Meir; for had he convinced her, the cabinet would have bowed. He missed Dayan, too, for his imagination might have found a way.

Afterward, to an acquaintance, Kissinger ruminated on his defeat. "Israel has no foreign policy," he said, "only domestic politics. . . . The Jews in history are generally intellectuals, cosmopolitans, people of long vision. But in Israel the ideal is that of the soldier-peasant. Generally the soldier is not intellectual, and few soldiers have vision. The peasant is known for his recalcitrance and excessive caution. It is the recalcitrance, excessive caution, lack of vision, that have caused the Israelis to refuse this agreement. . . . They're so legalistic, so Talmudic."

Reassessment

Shortly before the collapse of the negotiation Kissinger visited Faisal at Riyadh. Their rapport had never been easy, but now Kissinger's travail with the Israelis provoked the king's compassion and his pledge to persevere in support of Kissinger's diplomacy; it was of their encounters the warmest and most satisfactory. A week later, Faisal was murdered by a mad nephew. The conjunction of that event with the failure in Sinai appeared to render the more probable all of the disasters Kissinger prophesied in Jerusalem. He was furious with the Israelis, and he took their refusal very personally—as directed not only at the United States but, above all, at himself.

For weeks after his return to Washington, Kissinger sulked and raged, castigating Israeli blindness to aides and visitors alike, compulsively telephoning distinguished Jews all over the country to complain of Israel's intransigence. His much-trumpeted "reassessment" of American policy in the Middle East was his revenge on Israeli behavior, a euphemism for the selective embargo of military equipment that he imposed forthwith upon Jerusalem. He summoned Dean Rusk, George Ball, David Rockefeller, Robert McNamara, and other dignitaries of the foreign policy establishment—the Israelis considered them a "stacked deck"—plus all of the important American ambassadors in the Middle East, to participate in this elaborate enterprise. He conferred as well with congressmen, Jewish leaders, and eminent academicians. The prospect of reassessment made marvelous theater, but what did it produce?

Three options soon emerged:

1. The United States should announce its conception of a final settlement in the Middle East, based on the 1967 frontiers of Israel with minor modifications, and containing strong guarantees for Israel's security. The Geneva conference should be reconvened: the Soviet Union should be encouraged to cooperate in this quest to resolve all

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outstanding questions (including the status of Jerusalem) which should be defined in appropriate components and addressed in separate subcommittees.

2. Failing the first option, the United States should seek a quasi-total settlement, for the near future, with Egypt the beneficiary. Israel should withdraw from most of the Sinai in return for political nonbelligerency; her final frontiers with Egypt to be determined at a later stage.

3. Failing the first and second options, the United States should endeavor to revive step-by-step diplomacy.

In the beginning, from April till early May, practically everyone Kissinger consulted favored the first option. His key ambassadors—Hermann Eilts (Egypt), Richard Murphy (Syria), and Thomas Pickering (Jordan)—all contributed to a long position paper urging this course; Kenneth Keating, his ambassador to Israel, concurred with reservations, then died shortly after his return to Tel Aviv. Oddly, though resolution of the Palestinian problem was implied in the first option, the question was otherwise deferred in the secret position paper and in the numerous discussions Kissinger undertook. That the United States should abandon Kissingerian ambiguity and publicly proclaim its concept of a global settlement based upon total or near-total Israeli withdrawal was the supreme Arab wish, just as to the Israelis it had always been the supreme abomination. Non-Zionists such as former senator William Fulbright had been urging it on Kissinger and Ford as the best means to achieve a settlement, but till now both had demurred for fear of the repercussions amongst supporters of Israel. In the event despite his apocalyptic warnings to the Israelis on March 22, Kissinger never really refined the first option. For as the weeks passed, his emotions cooled, his capacity for cold analysis prevailed, and his plunge into the metaphysics of reassessment was negated by other forces.

The Arabs had no common strategy nor

consensus about the concessions they should render Israel should Geneva be revived. The Russians had hesitations about Geneva without a common strategy and with no Arab consensus; they were in no hurry to sponsor a fiasco. Sadat coveted territory quickly, but he feared further Israeli procrastination at Geneva, and he could not risk the second option—a quasi-total settlement—because without similar progress on all fronts he would become a leper to his brother Arabs. Kissinger's peroration to the Israelis on March 22 was brilliantly contrived, but their flair for realpolitik is as keen as his, and he did not deceive them. Sadat possessed no serious war option—American deliveries of guns and aircraft to Israel had seen to that—and the Israelis knew it. Sadat's relations with the Russians could hardly have been worse: he had chosen the Americans exclusively and now he was stuck with them. The radicals of Araby roared with impotence; Sadat reaffirmed his faith in Kissinger, renewed the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) mandate in the Sinai, and, in early June, reopened the Suez Canal. All of these factors coalesced to belie Kissinger's apocalypse—or at least to postpone it—but it was the Israeli lobby that dealt reassessment its coup de grâce.

Kissinger's interaction with American Jews has played a crucial and tempestuous part in the fashioning of his Middle East policy. If he could not convince American Jews, how could he move Israel? From the morrow of the October war he has conferred regularly with Jewish leaders and intellectuals, explaining the motives of his diplomacy and appealing for their support. His basic message has never changed—the war created new realities; the moderate Arabs are ready for peace; Israel, for its own survival, must respond whilst America can influence the Arabs; peace can never come unless Israel makes concessions. For a time Kissinger seemed to make some impression with this argument, but by the end of 1974 he was regarded by many American Jews as a foe

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of Israel and by some as a traitor to his race. It became a truism in the State Department that Kissinger's Jewishness helped him with the Arabs, harmed him with the Israelis. Last summer, a luminary of the lobby echoed a sentiment I had already heard: "Kissinger is a self-hating Jew."

I cannot penetrate Kissinger's heart, but his closest aides observe that nothing has caused him greater anguish than accusations such as that. "He's objective about Israel," says one, "but not detached. How could he be? He has a strong sense of 'these are my people.' He's immensely proud to be a Jew. When he pleads for changes in Israeli policy it's precisely because he wants Israel and Jewry to prosper. It tears his guts out to be accused of treachery to his own." During those impassioned weeks following the abortive negotiation, Kissinger asked several of his Jewish visitors, "How could I, as a Jew, do anything to betray my people?" More than once, he came close to tears.

During April, the corridors of the State Department resounded with brave resolve for the pursuit of the first option. "We've got to save the Israelis from themselves. . . . Congress is fed up, too, and whatever we decide, Congress will go along. . . ." There was indeed much general speculation last spring about erosion of pro-Israeli sentiment in Congress; the lobby recognized that if Kissinger was to be stopped, he would have to be stopped on Capitol Hill. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the vanguard of the lobby in Washington, was intensely active during this period, assailing not only Kissinger's person but his policies in the Middle East, Turkey, and far beyond; militants of the lobby canvassed the House and Senate, exhorting the members to ever greater moral and military support of Israel. Simultaneously, Israeli "truth squads"—composed of such as Eban, Allon, and Dayan—dispersed throughout the nation, rebutting Kissinger's version of the March negotiation and struggling to sustain the image of Israel as a beleaguered democ-

racy still ardent in the quest of peace.

Whatever resentment many congressmen may inwardly entertain about the pressures of the lobby, the American system itself predestines them to yield. Israel possesses a powerful American constituency; the Arabs do not, and despite their wealth, the oil companies as well are unequal to the impact of ethnic politics. In formulating the first option, Kissinger's advisers envisioned Ford going to the American people, explaining lucidly and at length on television the issues of war and peace in the Middle East, pleading the necessity of Israeli withdrawal in exchange for the strongest guarantees. The president, too, was angry at Israel, and for a time he toyed with this notion of appealing over the heads of the lobby and of Congress directly to the people. He hesitated. "How will it play in Peoria?" he asked. "You'll never know until you do it," Fulbright urged him. "Do it first—then Peoria will follow." But Ford was afraid of the political repercussions, and so was Kissinger. A senior diplomat who visited Washington frequently during this period told me, "Each time that I returned, I remarked the further erosion of the first option."

On May 21, 76 U.S. senators wrote collectively to the president to endorse Israel's demand for "defensible" frontiers and massive economic and military assistance. The letter was a stunning triumph for the lobby, a capital rebuke for Kissinger in Congress. (The lobby reaffirmed its strength in summer, humiliating Kissinger and Hussein by obstructing in the Senate the sale of defensive Hawk missiles to Jordan.) The senatorial epistle was Israel's riposte to reassessment; it helped to kill the reassessment, notwithstanding later pretenses that the corpse lived on. At about this time, Sisco, Atherton, and Saunders unanimously advised Kissinger that the first option had no hope of surviving the counterattacks of the lobby—that now the administration had no choice but to resume step-by-step diplomacy. Kissinger concurred, and reserved a new option—that at

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some future date, when the president was stronger, when his prospects were more auspicious, he might go to the people with a plan for peace based upon the first option.

Thus, when Ford met Sadat at Salzburg in early June, he repulsed Sadat's plea for a public commitment to the 1967 borders, and soothed him instead with a restatement of Nixon's secret promise. Sadat agreed to resume interim negotiations, but stood on his insistence that Israel disgorge the passes and the oil fields. When Rabin visited Washington a week later, Kissinger and Ford were extremely stern. Again they endorsed the Egyptian demands, stressing that Israel could not count on substantial American aid until it negotiated a new settlement in the Sinai. With unwonted adroitness, Ford dangled the first option before Rabin's wary eye. If Israel did not negotiate more generously, the president warned, then he would revive Geneva. There, he implied, the United States would favor substantial restitution of the 1967 frontiers. Kissinger, in fact, protested the continuing entrenchment of Israeli settlements in occupied Arab territory, and bluntly told Rabin that eventually Israel must abandon the settlements and retreat substantially to the 1967 boundaries.

Rabin got the message. Nevertheless, he knew that to sustain its Arab policy the United States needed the agreement desperately, and for that he intended to extract a very high price. Thus, the Israelis resumed their tested posture—playing for time—whilst the price was worked out. At Jerusalem, cabinet meetings were postponed, "clarifications" were requested, and "elucidations" were demanded of Kissinger and Sadat. The Israelis aspired to retain at least a foothold in the passes; the rest of June, all of July, much of August was consumed as they haggled with Kissinger over the locus of the new line. Kissinger promised about $1.8 billion in new arms and economic aid. An Israeli request for $2.5 billion was pending, but by mid-August the demand had mounted to nearly $3.5 billion. At that point,

Mordechai Gazit, the director general of Rabin's office, arrived in Washington with the Israeli drafts of the secret "Memoranda of Understanding" that Israel expected the United States to append to the new agreement. The drafts, says one of Kissinger's senior aides, "were simply incredible. They amounted to a formal political and military alliance between Israel and the United States. They would have granted Israel an outright veto over future American policy in the Middle East."

Kissinger, meanwhile, was distressed by the Israeli maps. He had to be certain the Israelis would leave the passes, so he sent a senior CIA official to authenticate their line *sur place*. On August 11, the official strolled through Giddi with Mordechai Gur and said, "General, you're still inside the pass." Nevertheless, Kissinger resumed his shuttle on August 20—his twelfth major mission to the Middle East.

The particulars of that negotiation—defining the "non-use of force," the buffer zone for the oil fields, the limitation of troops and weaponry et cetera—we need not dissect anew. For the Israeli right, it was all perfidious. At Jerusalem, on the first night, after a dinner with the cabinet, Kissinger was trapped in the Knesset for over an hour by thousands of angry youths. When he regained the King David Hotel, they gave him no repose. My room was situated a few floors below his, and toward 4:00 AM I was awakened by a chorus of loudspeakers. "Kissinger go home! Kiss-in-ger! Kiss-in-ger go! Kiss-in-ger go go! Kiss-in-ger go go home home! Jew boy! Jew boy go home!" I got up from bed and opened the shutters. The youths were concealed in the darkness of the old no man's land; beyond them the walls of the Old City and the Mount of Olives loomed in a soft light. "Jew boy go home!" They were the Gush Emunim—Front of the Faithful—and every time the police suppressed one loudspeaker, another erupted somewhere else. In the morning, Kissinger was beside himself. "We're moving to the

Hilton," he told his entourage. But the King David was a transplanted State Department —a warren of typists, staff aides, Telex installations—and could not be abandoned.

Later, at Rabin's residence, Kissinger discussed monitoring stations in the Sinai—to be manned separately by Israelis, Egyptians, and Americans.

Kissinger: I don't think an American presence is a good idea. I think it's a mistake.

Peres: It has a logic and a purpose. The aerial reconnaissance the United States provided after the first disengagement—mere American involvement—reduced tension and helped stabilize a nervous situation. We're now adding an American land reconnaissance role in the most sensitive part of the Sinai. The presence of even a symbolical group of American technicians would serve as a [deterrent] for either side. . . . I know that Americans might say, "This is the way things began in Vietnam." I see no comparison. A buffer zone is a buffer zone. It's extraterritorial.

Kissinger: It's a mistake. There will be a reaction in the United States to this kind of thing. How will it appear to the American people—Americans there against a surprise attack?

At Alexandria, Sadat seemed strangely resigned to whatever "Dr. Henry" might do for him. Sadat could not accept less than the passes and the oil fields, but otherwise he accommodated most Israeli conditions. Kissinger spent comparatively little time in Egypt. Sadat was simply not a quibbler: he guided the negotiation, but left the details to Fahmy and Gamasy. Whilst Sadat napped in the afternoons, Kissinger repaired to Fahmy's beach house on the Mediterranean, in the shadow of Montaza Palace, Farouk's old fantasy of Kubla Khan. There, sometimes as they waded in the sea, Kissinger resolved with the two ministers such complexities as U.N. checkpoints, early warning systems, and the limitation of SCUD missiles. Once, Sadat joined them for luncheon and a swim. Again, during this negotiation, Kissinger

complained to the Egyptians of Israeli excess. "It's unbelievable what they're demanding," he said. "Rabin, Peres, Allon—they're not negotiating as a team, they're each pursuing personal ambitions." Or were they, he asked, deliberately acting thus to destroy the negotiation and to bring him down?

The great issue was still the passes. The Israelis claimed their line took them out, but Kissinger examined aerial photographs and told them it did not. By August 26, the Egyptians had agreed to Israeli and American monitoring stations, but the Israeli line was still in doubt. At the eleventh hour, the Israelis capitulated—though not completely. In the Mitla, it was difficult to define where the eastern entrance was, but basically they were out of that pass. In the Giddi, they relinquished the road, but clung to some high ground on the northern perimeter, and bent their line westward slightly between the passes to retain some hills. Sadat was bemused that Kissinger could not push them further, but acquiesced.

Whilst Kissinger was resolving the line, Atherton remained in Jerusalem negotiating American commitments to Israel—a task equally tortuous. The Israeli drafts, which they had insisted be renamed "Memoranda of Agreement" to render them more binding, were phrased in absolute language which Atherton kept watering down. When Kissinger returned each night to Jerusalem, he diluted them further still. For example, the Israelis wanted an absolute American commitment to intervene if the Soviet Union threatened to attack Israel. Kissinger promised only to consult Israel. At the end of the negotiation, Atherton went two nights without sleep as the Israelis kept demanding word changes in the main agreement and military annex. Peres did not wish the Egyptians to renew the UNEF mandate "annually" but "for a year every year." The quibbling continued till the moment Kissinger took his last leave for Alexandria on September 1. "What you must understand," an Israeli leader told me, "is that we're not

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negotiating with the Americans. We're negotiating with the Arabs."

Even as modified by Kissinger, the final American-Israeli Memoranda of Agreement was—as his own aides admitted—"mind-boggling." For example:

> The [U.S.] Government . . . will seek to prevent . . . proposals which it and Israel agree are detrimental to the interests of Israel. . . . The United States is resolved . . . to maintain Israel's defensive strength through the supply of advanced types of equipment, such as the F-16 aircraft [and] to undertake a joint study of high technology and sophisticated weapons, including the Pershing ground-to-ground missiles with conventional warheads, with the view to giving a positive response. . . . The United States . . . will not recognize or negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization so long as the [PLO] does not recognize Israel's right to exist and does not accept Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The [U.S.] Government will consult fully and seek to concert its position and strategy at the Geneva peace conference with the Government of Israel.

In the shadow of such promises, Kissinger's commitment of 200 technicians in the Sinai seemed suddenly inconsequential.

The memoranda, however qualified, and despite Kissinger's and Ford's denials, amounted almost to a marriage contract. If America must pay a dowry so large for a small fraction of the Sinai, what must it pay for real peace? Such were the alarums of the Congress, whose letter of the 76 had helped to kill Kissinger's first option, and whose members were themselves at fault. I have no evidence of this, but I suspect that lurking in Kissinger's Medicean mind was at least half the wish that the Israelis would overreach their American constituency and impair their power base in Congress. If that was his trap, the Israelis stepped into it. Demanding the Pershing missile—with its capacity to carry atomic warheads from Tel Aviv to Aswan—was a terrible mistake, and it is not astonishing that later the Israelis demurred.

Nevertheless, the second Sinai agreement was a major tactical triumph for Israel. She relinquished little (by the admission of several Israeli generals) of strategic value in the passes, and wrested from the United States a moral, monetary, and military cornucopia unattained by any other foreign power. Above all, the agreement partially fulfilled Rabin's central purpose. As a senior Israeli official told *Time* magazine:

> Given nonacceptance of Israel by the Arabs, we have been maneuvering since 1967 to gain time and to return as little as possible. The predominant government view has been that stalemates are to our advantage. Our great threat has been the Rogers plan—and American policy to move us back to the [1967] lines. The . . . agreement with Egypt is another nail in the coffin of that policy. We realize that the entire world is against us on the issue of borders and that we are terribly dependent on one nation for sophisticated arms. Nevertheless, we have been successful for the past . . . eight years, and we may have to go on maneuvering for another ten. If the . . . interim agreement [gave] us only six months rather than three years, we would buy it because the alternative is Geneva and . . . more pressure to go back to the 1967 borders. The . . . agreement has delayed Geneva, while . . . assuring us arms, money, a coordinated policy with Washington and quiet in Sinai. . . . We gave up a little for a lot.

Moreover, even though the agreement may not assure Israel a stalemate of several years, it is doubtful she will move an inch before the American elections. The pause should be more than ample to enable Israel to pursue the second level of her policy—entrenchment in the territories. In Gaza and all over Golan; at Yamit and Sharm el Sheikh in the Sinai; at Jerusalem and near Jericho, Hebron, Nablus, Bethlehem and Ramallah on the West Bank—thousands of acres have been expropriated, thousands of Israelis have taken root in farms, industries, and apartment complexes. The entrenchment continues with deliberate speed. "I don't see those installations," Kissinger has said. "They're

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transparent. I look right through them. When the time comes for me to open my dossiers on Golan and the West Bank, I shan't let them impede a settlement. When the time comes, the president will prevail on the Israelis to withdraw." I wonder.

As for Egypt, Sadat gave Israel nonbelligerency in all but name. Secretly, he promised Kissinger not to participate in battle should Syria attack Israel. Kissinger briefed him on the American-Israeli memoranda, but not about the superweapons. Sadat disliked the agreement, but he had no choice. Egypt's economy was desperate; it would collapse without foreign investment. The army, bereft of weapons to match Israel's, could not resume war for several years. No choice? Nonsense, says Mohammed Hassanein Haikal, the celebrated editor who once was Nasser's (and Sadat's) gray eminence. "Kissinger is destroying his own investment in Sadat," Haikal told me on the morrow of the agreement. "He's isolated him from the rest of the Arab world, and in that isolation Sadat will fail to find the oil money he needs for Egypt. Kissinger has no strategy, except to reduce the Arab-Israeli conflict into fragments. Egypt alone will not be worth much to the United States, and powerless to cope with its own poverty."

Kissinger received similar reproaches from Assad and King Hussein when he visited them in early September. Assad accused him of dividing the "Arab nation," a foreshadowing of his furious attacks upon Sadat. During an angry meeting at Amman, Rifai assailed the agreement and refused to support it publicly; the king was more cordial, though equally distressed. When I saw Assad and Hussein in late September, they complained bitterly of the weapons for Israel. Assad all but described Kissinger as Israel's foreign minister; Hussein warned me of "new disasters not far away."

Assad and Hussein were no more vexed about the Israeli weapons than were many officials of the U.S. government. Led by Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, most

of the Pentagon, the CIA, the Treasury, the Office of Management and Budget, many officials of the State Department, strongly opposed substantial quantities of new arms for Israel. If Kissinger's current commitment is sustained for the next four years, Israel will receive $5 billion or more in arms by 1980, many of them outright gifts. Does Israel truly require hundreds of F-15 and F-16 aircraft, Hawk missiles, Lance missiles, M60 A3 tanks, and laser-guided "smart" bombs to maintain an effective deterrent against the Arabs? "Israel wants 1,000 per cent security," says a Pentagon official, "and she's getting it."

Since the October war, the United States has provided Israel with at least $3 billion worth of precision-guided munitions, cluster bomb units, tanks, armored personnel carriers, self-propelled artillery, cargo trucks, cargo aircraft, rifles, helicopters, antitank guided rockets, electronic counterradar boxes, Phantoms, and Skyhawks. Before October 1973, the Israelis relied excessively upon their air force, but now the United States has rectified their failings in infantry and artillery and instilled in them the science of coordinated warfare. "In quality, and even quantitatively in some respects," says the Pentagon official, "Egypt, Syria, and Jordan together cannot match the force of Israel nor shall they for the next decade. Their MIGs cannot compare with the F-15s and F-16s, and besides, their pilots lack skill. Their SCUDs? If they fired a dozen at Tel Aviv, half might hit Beirut."

Several ministers in Rabin's own government dissent from his and Peres' arms policy, protesting that if Israel continues thus she may perish from insolvency. Early last year, Kissinger complained to friends that "When I ask Rabin to make concessions he says he can't because Israel is weak. So I give him more arms, and he says he doesn't need to make concessions because Israel is strong." During the abortive negotiation of March, Kissinger lamented his failure to extract concessions first; immense arms shipments to

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Israel "was naive—my biggest mistake." Following the second Sinai agreement, Kissinger argued that the new arms would encourage Israeli flexibility. He had said the same five years ago, when he assumed concessions would result once Israel was invincible. Kissinger had come full circle.

"What Are the Alternatives?"

We have witnessed in Kissinger's journeys through Israel and Araby a diplomatic odyssey unequaled in our time. But the works of peace that he so hopefully embarked upon two years ago seem suspended now in a winter of doubt and discontent. In late October, I confronted Kissinger in Washington with some of the reservations about his policies that I have recorded here. He appeared harassed and exhausted, but his answer gave me pause. "What are the alternatives?" he asked. "The conflict in the Middle East has a history of decades. Only during the last two years have we produced progress. It's easy to say that what we've done is not enough, but the steps we've taken are the biggest steps so far. They were *the attainable*—given our prevailing domestic situation."

His response impressed me because it pleaded what is, not what might have been. His maxim, "Israel has no foreign policy, only domestic politics," he might have uttered of the United States—especially as it involves the Middle East. When I observed once to an aide of Kissinger's that Israel's American constituency is the greatest constraint upon our policy, he replied, "Of course. And the constraint becomes the determinant." Within and sometimes against those constraints, despite his errors, Kissinger has often behaved heroically.

Moreover, the second level of his policy —promoting American technology amongst the Arabs whilst he copes with the Arab-Israeli conflict—has proven a considerable success. For this, Kissinger must share his laurels with several agencies of the government and with American technology at

large; but he has encouraged the phenomenon and helped it prosper. Paradoxically, despite her tactical victory in the second Sinai agreement, Israel may ultimately suffer the most from Kissinger's parallel policy if she does not conclude a final peace before the Arabs master all the marvels of American technology.

Kissinger's Arab policy—still anchored on Sadat—remains intact, though it is buffeted by angry winds. Kissinger erred in supposing that Sadat could control the rest of Araby; Assad's acrimonious rupture with Egypt over the second Sinai agreement may emasculate Kissinger's credibility as an arbiter between Israel and the Arabs. Beyond this, Egypt's chaotic internal condition is scarcely Kissinger's fault; Sadat may be a world statesman, but he knows little of managing an economy, and parts of his government are dank with corruption. Even on the world stage, Sadat has stumbled. Had Sadat been less ardent in pressing Kissinger to favor the Egyptian interest and more loyal to the Arab unity he achieved for the October war, the Arab world might be more confident today to make concessions and closer to peace with Israel.

A questionable hypothesis, perhaps—but strategy is based upon hypothesis and we must wonder about Kissinger's. Did Kissinger ever conceive a coherent strategy for concluding the Arab-Israeli conflict? Assad, had he eavesdropped on that dramatic meeting at Jerusalem on March 22, 1975, might have confirmed his fear that Kissinger's strategy was simply to protect Israel from having to retreat to her old borders. I feel that Kissinger planned to nudge the Israelis back toward those very boundaries, and much more quickly, but was obstructed by circumstances he himself helped to bring about. I agree with professor Stanley Hoffmann of Harvard, who remarked to me that Kissinger has been caught in the dilemma of "playing several roles at once. He's a conceptualist, a negotiator, and a day-to-day manager. The conceptualist begins by defining his goal,

then recognizes obstacles en route, and tries to reduce them. The negotiator is caught up in the complications of the day, no longer defines the goal for its own sake, and makes the goal whatever remains after allowing for all the obstacles. Henry has done this in Vietnam, and in the Middle East. He favors the short run over the long run. Curious, because he's equally gifted in either direction. He'll produce a brilliant conceptual analysis of a problem, then a set of almost completely tactical proposals."

Thus tactical success becomes a goal in itself. If Arafat is like a cyclist atop a tightrope, Kissinger is like a lumberjack leaping from log to log, wishing that the river will lead him somewhere else. He suffers, by his own admission, from the syndrome of success; though his tactics have been brilliant and his techniques, too, strategically he has sinned on the side of caution. Perhaps his greatest achievement is to have bought time, prevented war, and erected the foundation for the pursuit of real peace. But can Kissinger himself consummate that wish? His method seems simply too slow, and if clung to may imperil peace for the great future. Interim diplomacy could conceivably conclude another minor Israeli withdrawal on the Golan, but it cannot address the central issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict such as the future of the Palestinian people, and those issues cannot be postponed much longer.

There are signs that Kissinger—eager to revive the confidence of Assad—is softening his attitude toward the Palestinians; for example, the declaration of former Deputy Assistant Secretary Saunders defining the Palestinian dimension as the "heart" of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Kissinger's acquiescense to the participation of the PLO in the Security Council debate in January. Contacts between the United States and the PLO have existed sporadically for several years, but so far no negotiations of substance have resulted. Privately, Arafat agrees to recognize Israel, but he will not

publicly deal this, his most potent card, until he is confident of a Palestinian state. That state, confined to Gaza and the West Bank, demilitarized, totally autonomous or confederated with Hashemite Jordan, is—despite immense obstacles—imaginable of creation: but it cannot be created unless the United States endorses the goal and then pursues it.

The endorsement may not come this election year, but the next administration will be unable to avoid the urgency of a general peace. That peace will perforce be based upon the 1967 boundaries, buttressed by guarantees for Israel that can include a defense treaty with the United States should Israel require further assurance of her security. Israel might not be asked to withdraw at once, simply to accept the principle then negotiate a timetable tied to concessions from the Arabs which would ultimately include formal recognition of her legitimacy. This is, of course, the first option, favored last spring by most American officials involved with the Middle East. If Kissinger—his capital and credibility spent with Israelis, Arabs, and Congress alike—cannot accomplish it, perhaps his successor could.

An illusion? Ironically this sort of settlement might have been possible on the morrow of the October war had Kissinger truly seized the opportunities of that period. But he feared then that to seek so much so soon was doomed to fail. We shall never know. What he did accomplish, and it was not small, resembles the reconciliation between T. S. Eliot's Archbishop and the King—"Peace, but not the kiss of peace/ A patched-up affair, if you ask my opinion." Hopefully, Kissinger or his successor will make an act of faith in failure, and in the end help Arabs and Jews to fashion something more substantial than interim solutions.